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ABSTRACT

This publication provides a "moment-in-time" picture of the vocational education and training (VET) system in Austria, describing the system as representing a social partnership, a system of cooperation and conflict resolution between the bodies representing employees and employers, as well as the government. The following four choices provided by the VET system are described: (1) young people can opt for various vocational training pathways, alongside upper secondary general education, which leads to university entrance; (2) higher VET schools and colleges lead simultaneously to both university entrance and an occupational qualification; (3) secondary technical and vocational schools provide basic subject-specific knowledge; and simultaneously an extension of general knowledge; and (4) apprenticeship in the framework of the dual system provides young people, through simultaneous training in a company and a vocational school, with an opportunity to combine training and work experience. The six chapters cover the following topics: (1) general information about Austria; (2) structure of the education system; (3) the vocational education and training system; (4) organization and funding; (5) qualitative aspects (including teacher training); and (6) trends and perspectives. Appendixes provide acronyms and abbreviations, addresses of related organizations, and a glossary of 29 terms. (Contains 28 references.) (KC)

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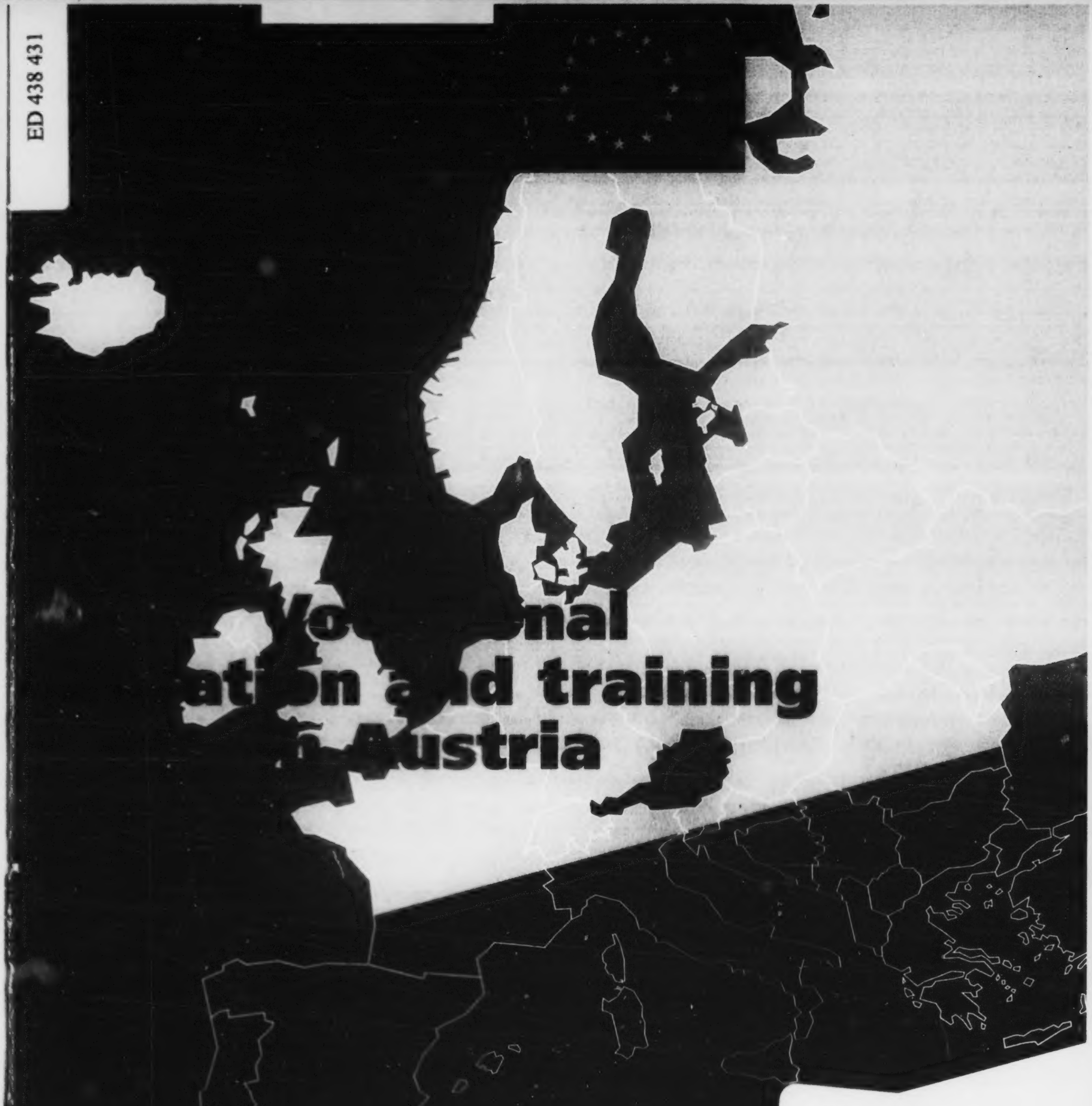

Vocational education and training in Austria

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Vocational education and training in Austria

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CEDEFOP introduction

Objective and target groups

The publication of this description of the vocational education and training system in Austria is a step towards up-dating and extending the series of descriptions of the (then 12) Member States published by CEDEFOP between 1993 and 1996 to include the three new Member States and countries covered by the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement. The objective is to present an overview of vocational education and training activities in Austria so that it is easily understood by interested foreigners. The target group includes those who may be responsible for, and concerned with, Vocational education and training policy issues, researchers in this field, directors of vocational training departments or institutions, and trainers and teachers, whether they work at EU or Member State level, or for a governmental or social partner organisation. Some may be using the text at their desks as a reference document, others may be visiting the country concerned either on a study visit or to plan or execute a bi- or multi-lateral project and more likely to wish to read the document from beginning to end.

Content and structure

The volumes in this series set out to describe initial and continuing vocational education and training (VET). As far as initial VET is concerned this means including provision which is in some cases the responsibility of Ministries of Education and in others of Ministries of Employment or Social Affairs. As far as continuing VET is concerned it requires coverage of provision for both the employed and unemployed, usually by a wide range of governmental bodies and ministries, by private and social partner organisations.

The structure of the report (see the list of contents) has been laid down in some detail by CEDEFOP, which has also placed limits on how long it should be. This is to make it easier for readers to make comparisons between the training systems in various EU Member States. The structure is, in general terms, similar to that adopted for the reports on the Member States commissioned in 1992, but there have been some changes such as the addition of a chapter on what we have called 'qualitative aspects', including information on certification, training of trainers and guidance. We are requiring the authors of all monographs including those updating the existing ones, to follow this amended structure, so as to facilitate readers who wish to try to make comparisons between the systems.

Choice of author and consultation procedures

For this series CEDEFOP has tried to achieve a product which in some ways is impossible. We wished to have a report written by an insider of the system concerned, but easily comprehensible to the outsider. It followed that the person/institution chosen as an author is an insider, located in the country being described and, unless they choose not to do so, writing in their mother tongue. A further corollary of this was that CEDEFOP has tried to play the role of 'outsider' in discussions on the draft text, in order to draw authors' attention to places where the report was likely not to be easily understood by the public for which it is intended.

CEDEFOP has also stipulated that the authors must carry out a consultation on the draft with the main parties involved in VET in their country. This has meant sending the draft not only to the various public bodies responsible for organising the system and providing VET, but also to the principal representative bodies of the social partners. The assistance of the members of the CEDEFOP's management board in the country concerned has in particular been requested in this connection.

Publishing and up-dating

It is CEDEFOP's intention, as long as the necessary resources are available, to publish these monographs in paper form in their original language and in English, French and German. In occasional and exceptional circumstances it may publish some monographs in additional languages. Experience has however shown that the time-scale involved in translating and publishing in hard copy form and the rate of change in the systems described means that the reports can almost never be entirely up-to-date. CEDEFOP intends therefore also to use electronic means of publishing, including making summaries and up-dates of the texts available on CEDEFOP's Internet site (www.training village.gr) and the publication of a CD-ROM.

Comments and feed-back
As indicated above, CEDEFOP is conscious that in preparing this series it has had to make choices. We would very much appreciate having readers' views as to whether we have made the right ones concerning the scope, content and structure of the report. We would be pleased to have your comments by letter, fax or e-mail.

Vocational education and training (VET) in Austria
Austria has a well developed VET system with a number of different choices:

- young people can opt for various vocational training pathways, alongside upper secondary general education, which leads to university entrance (*Matura*);
- higher VET schools and colleges lead simultaneously to both the *Matura* and an occupational qualification in the sense of the guidelines in the second EU directive on recognition;
- secondary technical and vocational schools provide basic subject-specific knowledge and simultaneously an extension of general knowledge;
- apprenticeship in the framework of the dual system provides young people, through simultaneous training in a company and a vocational school, with an opportunity to combine training and work experience.

In Austria as in all member states of the European Union, as a result of the process of economic and social change, the VET system is undergoing a continuous process of reform. The latest of these have brought the introduction of a more practically-oriented higher education level training through the law establishing the specialised higher education institutions (*Fachhochschulen*) and of the *Berufsreifeprüfing* which makes it possible for those who have completed apprenticeship or a secondary technical or vocational school to enter higher education. Reforms also include the creation of new apprentice occupations and reductions in the financial and administrative burden born by companies.

An interesting characteristic of the Austrian system is the economic and social partnership, which is a system of cooperation and conflict resolution between the bodies representing the employees and the employers, as well as the government. This social partnership model plays a significant role in the area of vocational education and training.

This publication should contribute to making the Austrian system, with its differentiated structure and its interesting and successful training forms, better known in other Member States.

We would like to thank the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Bildungsforschung* (*abf* — the working group for training research) and all the authors who have written this monograph. They responded very positively to the comments and proposals for changes which CEDEFOP made. We are particularly grateful to Dr Klaus Schedler, the Austrian employer member of CEDEFOP's management board, for the key coordination and editorial role which he played.

We hope that together we have provided the reader with a useful tool.

Stavros Stavrou
Deputy Director

J. Michael Adams
Project coordinator

Reinhard Nöbauer
Project coordinator

Thessaloniki, November 1998

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Authors' preface

Education systems across the European Union, and particularly their vocational education and training elements, show a remarkable diversity in terms of structures and priorities. Although perhaps confusing at first sight, this diversity can be traced back to the systems' different routes of historical development and thus represents not only a reflection of national economic, social and cultural traditions but also, taken as a whole at European level, an inestimable wealth of education and training concepts.

Yet despite this diversity, the common and primary aim of all vocational training endeavours throughout the EU is to integrate the individual citizen into working life and adult society. It is clear that as society continues to change, the requirements to be met for continued participation in working life change likewise. The impact of this process on vocational education and training has to be a move away from static, allocated roles for education and training providers and the development of flexible, dynamic structures which are capable of responding to economic and social challenges as they arise.

There is currently evidence, for example, of a shift of emphasis from initial vocational training to continuing training and lifelong learning, though in many fields this shift is still in its infancy. Looking to the near future, the resulting increased importance attached to continuing training will be not only a phenomenon in itself, but one which has repercussions on initial vocational training to the effect that this has to be more than preparation for work in a skilled occupation — it also has to be a sure foundation for continuing vocational training.

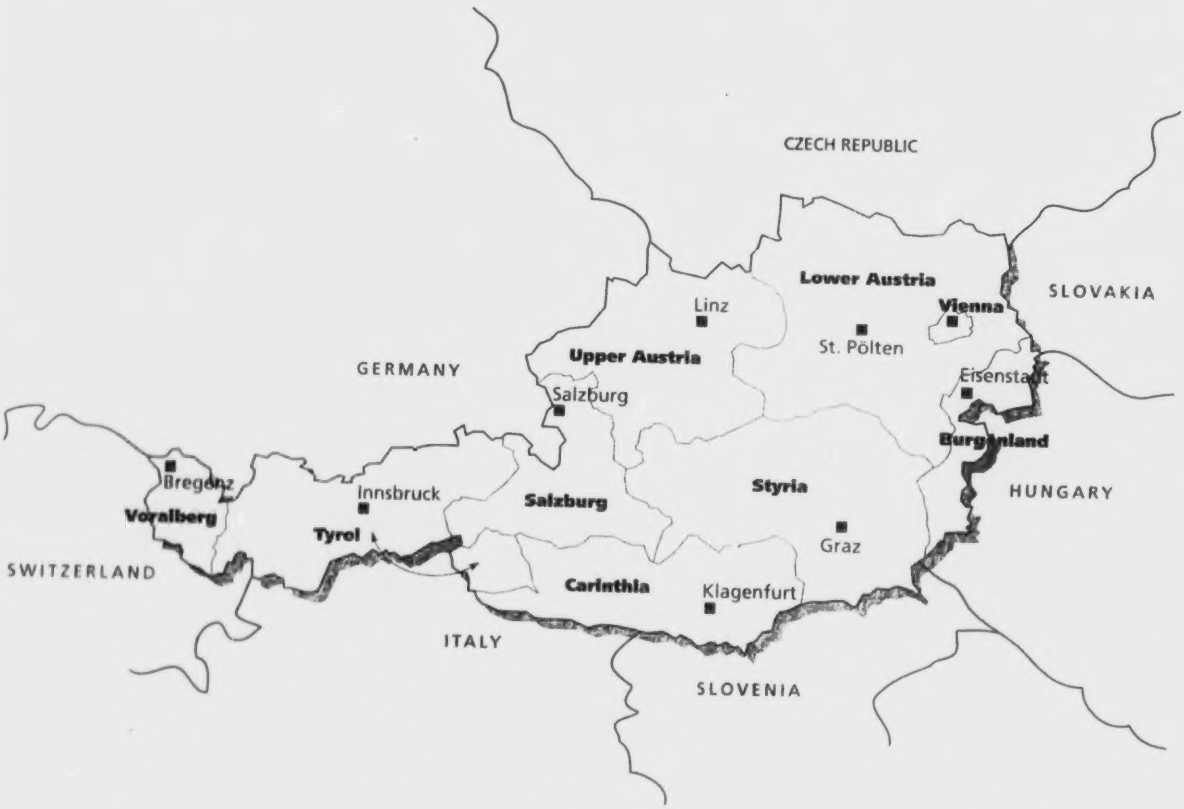
Given this evolving situation, this report on the vocational education and training system in Austria cannot claim to be more than a 'freeze frame' portraying a moment in time — though comparison with a previous report published by CEDEFOP only a few years ago reveals the scale of the changes which have already taken place. This report, however, is not an update of that original version, it is a total reworking reflecting the current situation. In view of the large number of political players directly or indirectly involved in bringing about the decisions which shape the Austrian education and training system, the authors have sought to present a balanced view of their different positions and expectations and, when addressing particularly sensitive issues, have had recourse to recent position statements which were approved by all parties concerned. Account was also taken of the need for a balanced presentation by sharing responsibility within the study group on vocational training research (*abf* — Austria), with the Vienna-based *ibw — Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft* (employers' institute for education and training research) bearing responsibility for setting out employers' viewpoints and the Linz-based *IBE — Institut für Berufs- und Erwachsenenbildungs — forschung* (a vocational and adult educational research institute affiliated to labour organisations) bearing responsibility for setting out the views of the bodies representing the workforce.

The authors are grateful for the technical support provided by CEDEFOP, the commissioning institutions, and also for the technical and financial support provided by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. Their thanks are extended to all who contributed in whatever way to the production of this document.

Vienna and Linz, August 1997

Vocational education and training in Austria

Austria: Federal States *(Bundesländer)* and their capitals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Chapter 1
General information

1.1. Political and administrative structures

1.1.1. The Republic of Austria

Under the terms of the 1920 constitution (in the amended version of 1929), Austria is a democratic republic whose legitimation derives from the people. Alongside these democratic and republican principles, the constitution also lays down those of federalism, the rule of law, and the separation of powers, though not that of a social welfare state. Another significant legal principle espoused by the Republic of Austria is that of permanent neutrality, a principle which is anchored in the Neutrality Act and is thus part of the Federal Constitution.

In July 1989 Austria demonstrated its readiness for accession to the European Community by submitting an application for membership. Accession negotiations commenced in February 1993. A referendum held on 12 June 1994 attracted a turnout of over 82% of the electorate and returned a clear majority of exactly two thirds in favour of accession. Austria became a member of the European Union on 1 January 1995.

Austria's head of state is the Federal President, who is elected directly by the people for a six-year term of office. The functions of the Federal President are largely ceremonial, though he or she acquires a central constitutional importance under extraordinary political circumstances.

The constitution provides for two chambers which together form the legislature at federal level: the National Council (*Nationalrat*), whose members are elected every four years on the basis of proportional representation in a general, equal, direct, personal and secret ballot, and the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*), whose members are appointed by the parliaments of the nine Federal States (*Bundesländer*) and which represents the interests of those States. The power of the Federal Council in the legislative process is restricted to a suspending veto which can be overruled if the National Council reaffirms its legislative decision. The National Council and the Federal Council together form the Federal Parliament (*Bundesversammlung*).

Under the terms of the constitution, the power to legislate at State level is allocated to each of the nine State Parliaments, though the Federal Government holds a right to object to decisions of the State Parliaments insofar as these affect matters which fall within its competence.

Executive power rests with the Federal States wherever the constitution does not appoint the Federation as the executive agency. The supreme administrative bodies of the Federation are the Federal President, the Federal Government and the individual federal ministers; the supreme administrative bodies of the Federal States are the State Governments and individual members thereof. Below the level of the State Governments and their ministers, executive power rests with the authorities of the district administrations. In policy matters for which provision is made for the possibility of delegating power, the local authorities can act as executive agencies on behalf of the Federation and the Federal States.

Covering an area of 83 854 km^2 in Central Europe, Austria extends from Lake Constance in the west to the edge of the Hungarian lowlands in the east. Mountains are the predominant topographical feature, with mountainous terrain accounting for approximately two thirds of the national territory.

From the political viewpoint, Austria is a federation composed of nine independent States (*Bundesländer*): Burgenland (3 965 km^2), Carinthia (9 533 km^2), Styria (16 387 km^2), Lower Austria (19 172 km^2), Upper Austria (11 980 km^2), Salzburg (7 155 km^2), Tyrol (12 647 km^2), Vorarlberg (2 601 km^2) and Vienna (415 km^2), the latter also being the capital and seat of the supreme federal institutions.

Austria has a population of approximately 8 047 000 (1995). With a population density of 104 inhabitants/km^2, Austria is only moderately populated, though vast areas of the national territory are uninhabited because of the nature of the terrain.

Austria's political landscape is today largely dominated by the five political parties which are represented on the National Council: the Social Democratic Party of Austria *(SPÖ)*, the Austrian People's Party *(ÖVP)*, the Austrian Liberal Party *(FPÖ)*, the Liberal Forum and the Green Alternatives *(GAL)*. For the first three decades of the post-war period, it was the two mainstream parties *SPÖ* and *ÖVP* which were the central figures on Austria's political stage. The 1980s, however, saw the emergence of new voting trends which caused these parties to suffer a relative loss of electoral support to the benefit of the other three parties. The 1980s also brought a decline in the previously strong sense of party loyalty felt by Austrian voters which had traditionally made for relatively stable voting patterns, and an increase in the number of voters ready to switch party.

One feature peculiar to Austria is its so-called 'economic and social partnership' (*Wirtschafts- und Sozialpartnerschaft*), usually abbreviated to 'social partnership'. The term refers to a mechanism for economic and political cooperation and conflict resolution between the umbrella organizations representing the two sides of industry and the government.

The following organisations subscribe to the social partnership:
- the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (*Wirtschaftskammer Österreich*), a statutory body which represents all entrepreneurs in the small and medium-sized industry sector;
- the Federation of Austrian Industry (*Vereinigung Österreichischer Industrieller*), a voluntary-membership body representing industrial companies and associated service companies;
- the Standing Committee of Presidents of the Chambers of Agriculture (*Präsidentenkonferenz der Landwirtschaftskammern*), which is the umbrella organisation of the chambers of agriculture and represents the interests of all self-employed persons engaged in agriculture;
- the Austrian Federation of Chambers of Labour *(Österreichischer Arbeiterkammertag)*, which is the umbrella organization of the statutory chambers of employees in the nine Federal States;
- the Austrian Trade Union Confederation (*Österreichischer Gerwerkschaftsbund*), a voluntary umbrella organization to which all the 14 trade unions in Austria are affiliated.

The social partnership serves as a mechanism for cooperation and coordinated action by all the major societal forces with a view to attaining the main objectives of economic and social policy — full employment, rising real incomes, social security, price stability, etc.

Although the social partnership has been able to avert any major social conflicts and has contributed much towards Austria's post-war economic growth, it has recently been the target of increasing criticism. The main criticism, repeatedly voiced in recent years, is that the consultations within its framework, in particular those of the Joint Commission (*Paritätische Kommission*), are held behind closed doors.

1.1.2. Decentralisation in the education and training system

The structure of Austria's education and training system necessarily entails a complex mesh of policy-making competence in matters relating to school-based vocational education, pre-vocational general education and initial and continuing vocational training. This competence, however, is divided and shared out in a manner which avoids overlap.

The two main policy-making institutions in the field of education and training, which together form the Federal Parliament, are the National Council (*Nationalrat*), which is the more important chamber within this bicameral system, and the Federal Council *(Bundesrat)*, which is the chamber representing the Federal States. Draft legislation is usually submitted to the National Council by the Federal Government on the basis of a unanimous vote. A two-thirds majority in the National Council is required for passing legislation on matters concerning the organisation of schooling. Before submission to the National Council, draft legislation and draft regulations are dispatched for comment to the federal ministries concerned, the governments of the Federal states and, to the extent that they concern matters falling within their field of competence, to any relevant statutory special-interest bodies. Also consulted in this procedure are any relevant non-statutory special-interest associations, in particular those representing the interests of employers and trade unions. In the case of matters concerning education, the consultation procedure also involves teachers' associations and the umbrella organisations of parents' associations and youth welfare associations.

Education and training issues in Austria fall mainly within the competence of two federal ministries: the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht und kulturelle Angelegenheiten*), which is responsible for matters of initial education and training, and the Federal Ministry of Science and Transport (*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Verkehr*), which is responsible for matters concerning universities and colleges of art.

The powers of the State Parliaments (*Landtage*), the legislative bodies of the Federal states, are restricted in education policy matters mainly to passing implementing acts and approving financing appropriations. Responsibility for execution of educational legislation rests with the State Governments. Agencies of the Federal Government known as state education councils (*Landesschulräte*), and subordinate to these, district education councils (*Bezirksschulräte*), are responsible for the administration and supervision of schools within the Federal States and their constituent districts.

The administration of universities differs in a number of fundamental respects from that of schools. Universities are federal institutions insofar as their locations and organisation are regulated by federal legislation. At the operational level, each university has areas of autonomy within which it is at liberty to take decision as it sees fit — always within the framework of existing laws and statutory regulations but without being bound by instructions from any federal ministry. By contrast, each university also has areas of activity within which its bodies and institutions are required to act on ministerial instruction from the Federal Ministry of Science and Transport.

1.2. Population

1.2.1. Demographic data

Austria's average population recorded for the year 1995 was 8 047 000, a figure which indicates only a relatively slight expansion since World War II (1951: 6 934 000). After peaking temporarily at 7 599 000 inhabitants in 1974, the population fell as a result of a negative natural balance and an outflow of foreign workers fleeing from the 1974 recession, and did not regain its 1974 level until 1988 (7 596 000). Since 1988 a positive economic climate and the opening of the eastern borders have resulted in a much higher inflow of foreigners which has in turn led to a significant increase in Austria's population.

As in most other Member States of the European Union, the age pyramid in Austria reveals an ageing population structure. The birth rate has been in decline since the mid-1970s. According to forecasts by the Austrian Central Statistics Office, the population will increase to 8.2 million by the year 2000. After peaking around 2020 at 8.4 million, the population will have fallen back to 8.3 million by 2030 as a result of ever larger birth shortfalls. During the same period, however, there will be a constant rise in the percentage of persons over 60 years of age: whereas over-60s accounted for 19.7 % of the total population in 1995, the corresponding figure for 2020 is forecast to be 26.7 %. By 2030, the forecasts suggest, one third (33 %) of Austria's citizens will be over 60 years of age.

Figure 1: **Structural elements in population variation, 1961 to 1991 (in thousands)**

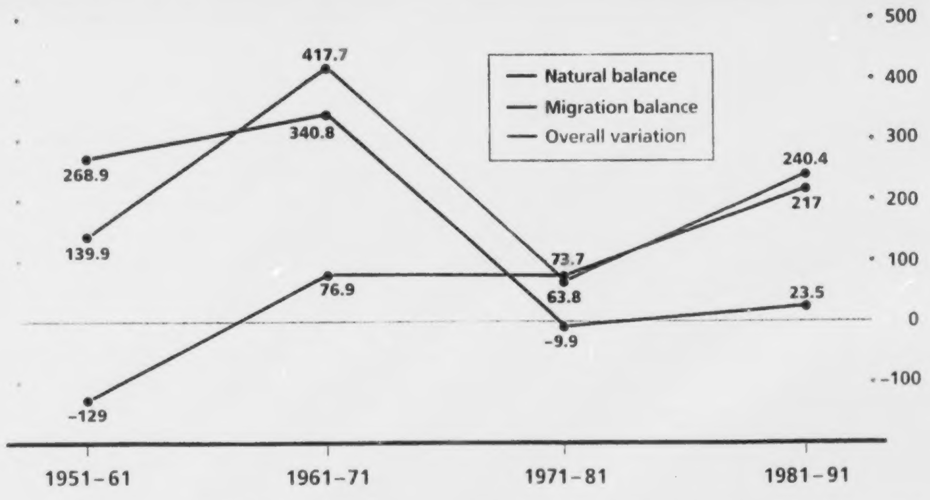

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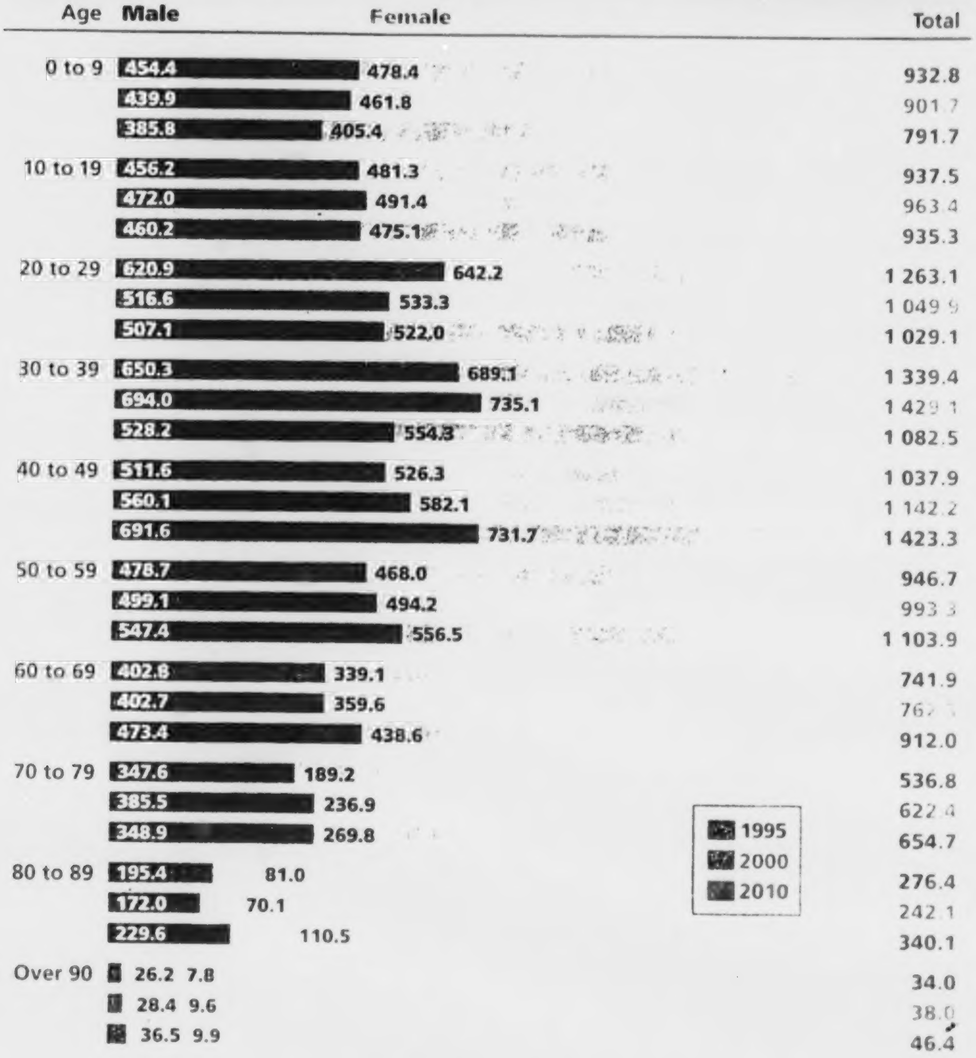
Figure 2: **Average annual population, 1995, 2000 and 2010 by age group and gender (in thousands)**



SOURCE AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT), STATISTISCHES JAHRBUCH 1996.

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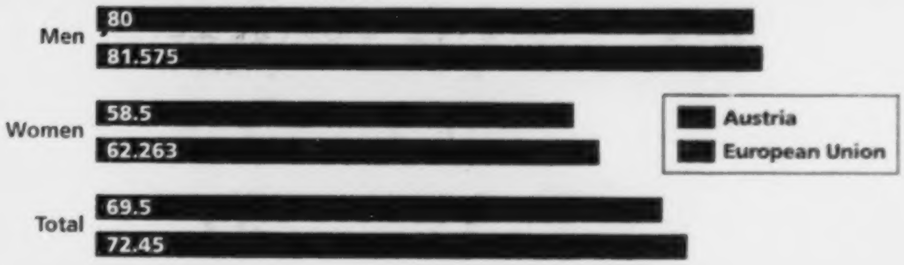
1.2.2. Employment

According to microcensus results, the average annual workforce amounted to 3 758 800, composed of 2 162 800 males and 1 596 000 females (data based on the labour force concept). Since 1994 the microcensus has collected data on employment and unemployment using two concepts: under the labour force concept a person is deemed to be employed if he/she either carried out at least one hour of paid work or occupied a job in the week prior to the census, and a person is deemed to be unemployed if he/she is actively seeking employment and would be available for work within two weeks. Under the source of livelihood concept, by contrast, a person is only deemed to be in employment if he/she designates him/herself as such and works an average of at least 12 hours per week, and a person is deemed to be unemployed if that person designates him/herself as such.

The overall employment rate, measured in terms of the entire population, was 48.3 %; for men it was 57.0 % and for women 40.1 %. Measured in terms of the population over 15 years of age, the corresponding figures were 58.8 %, 70.3 % and 48.3 % respectively, with the 48.3 % for women indicating a relatively low female employment rate by international standards.

Figure 3: **Employment rates for 15 to 65 year-olds, 1993 (in per cent)**



SOURCE **AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT), STATISTISCHES JAHRBUCH 1996.**

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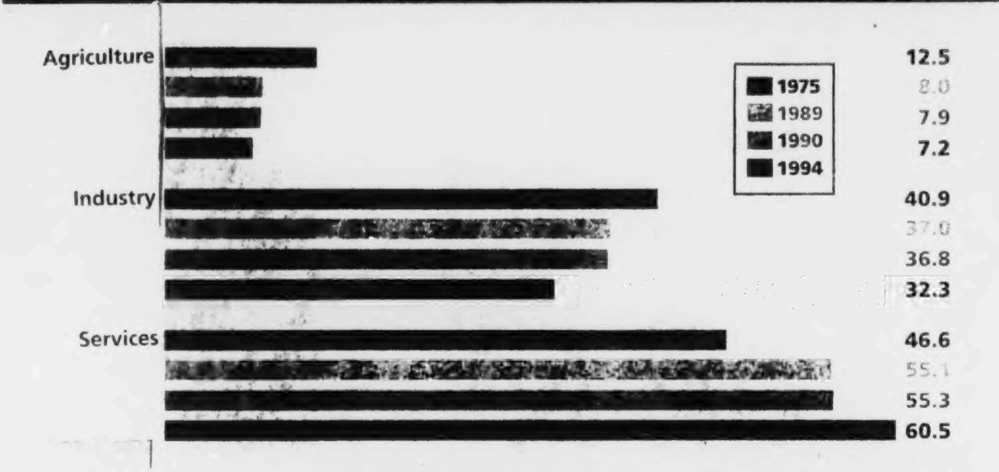
Figure 4: **Employment by economic sector, 1975 to 1994 (in per cent)**



SOURCE: *AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT), STATISTISCHES JAHRBUCH 1996.*

Table 1: **Employment by sector 1989–94**

Sector	**1989**	**1991**	**1993**	**1994**
Agriculture and forestry	27 899	27 739	26 884	26 476
Power and water supply	33 156	32 862	32 137	31 798
Food and beverage production	95 084	94 734	90 419	89 033
Wood working and timber processing	84 389	87 543	86 368	86 777
Metal production and metal working	366 100	374 171	347 605	338 550
Construction	221 378	237 796	246 430	253 649
Other processing industries	267 435	263 584	238 064	226 248
Commerce, warehousing	395 652	423 905	426 644	428 363
Banking and lending	214 935	224 059	228 322	228 445
Real estate, legal and management services	104 288	111 256	109 421	109 239
Public administration, social insurance institutions and special-interest associations	460 883	479 671	506 799	517 032
Other services	543 464	582 021	616 748	636 040
National service (including conscientious objectors)	15 637	16 337	14 957	13 709
Leave for personal reasons	31 995	41 674	84 112	85 373
Total	**2 862 291**	**2 997 352**	**3 054 910**	**3 070 732**

SOURCE: *AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT).*

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The following long-term developments in employment rates — assuming employment to signify a working week in excess of 13 hours — have been evident over the past few years.

- The age of entry into working life has continued to rise. Longer schooling has reduced employment rates among young males aged between 15 and 20 years from 57.3 % in 1984 to 51.7 % in 1993 and those for their female peers from 49.1 % to 41.8 %. Young people in apprenticeships are classified here as persons in employment. The employment rate among men aged between 20 and 25 has likewise declined over the same period, falling from 86.0 % to 75.4 %, though that among their female peers showed a slight increase from 70.5 % to 70.9 % despite their staying on longer at school. In 1971 the employment rate for this age group had been 88 % for men but only 69 % for women.

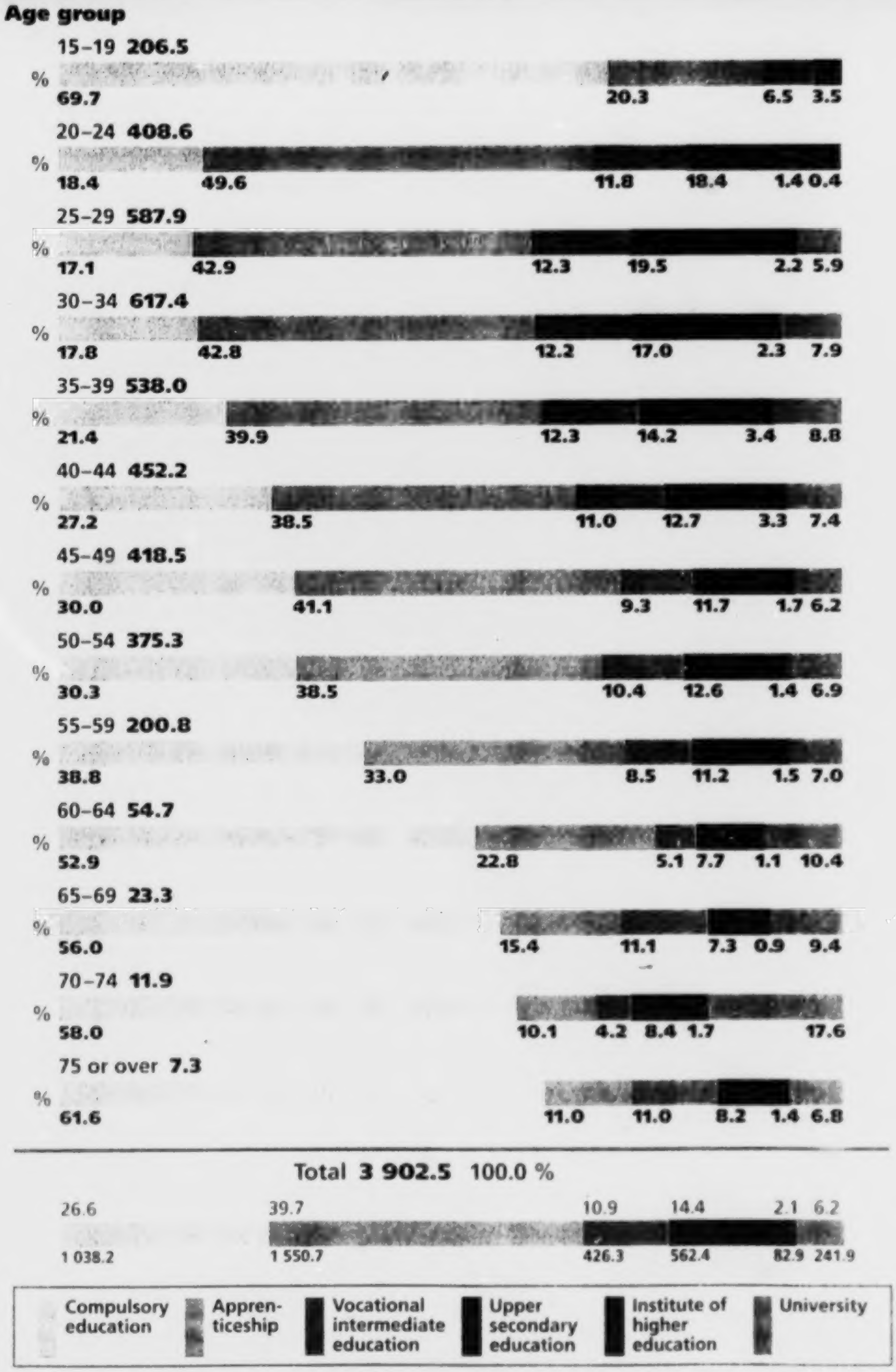
- There has been a decline in the number of older persons in employment, the employment rate now being very low among women over 55 and men over 60 years of age. In 1993 only 8.8 % of all 60 to 64 year-olds (1984: 15 %) and only 2.5 % of persons over 65 years of age were in employment.

- Whereas there has been virtually no change in the employment rate for males aged 25 to 55, the female employment rate has continued to rise substantially, for example from 62.2 % in 1984 to 75.9 % in 1993 for the 25 to 29 year-old age group. One of the main factors influencing employment rates has been education and training, especially among women. For women up to 59 years of age, the employment rate was 86 % among those with a higher education qualification but only 49 % among those with the compulsory school leaving certificate. Well-qualified women also remain at work much longer: by the time they reached the 55 to 59 age group, 67 % of those with a higher education qualification were still gainfully employed compared with only 24 % of their peers holding the compulsory school leaving certificate.

- The education and training standard of the working population is continually rising. By 1995 only 26.6 % of the working population held no qualification higher than the compulsory school leaving certificate. By contrast, 8.3 % of the working population held a higher education qualification and 25 % a post-compulsory education qualification. An important pillar of the vocational training system in Austria is the apprenticeship (*duales*) system. Some 39.7 % of the population in employment in 1995 held an apprenticeship qualification.

Parallel to the sectoral shifts in overall employment and the rise in education and training standards, there has been a change in the employment status structure of the working population. The fraction accounted for by self-employed persons and family helpers in agriculture and forestry has declined to 6.2 % compared with 7.8 % in 1980. 7.7 % of the working population are self-employed. The fraction of white-collar employees and public officials in the workforce has increased to 48.1 %, that of blue-collar workers has declined proportionately to 37.9 %.

Figure 5: **Persons in employment by age group and highest qualification level, 1995 (in thousands and as percentage of each age group)**



SOURCE: *AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT), STATISTISCHES JAHRBUCH 1996.*

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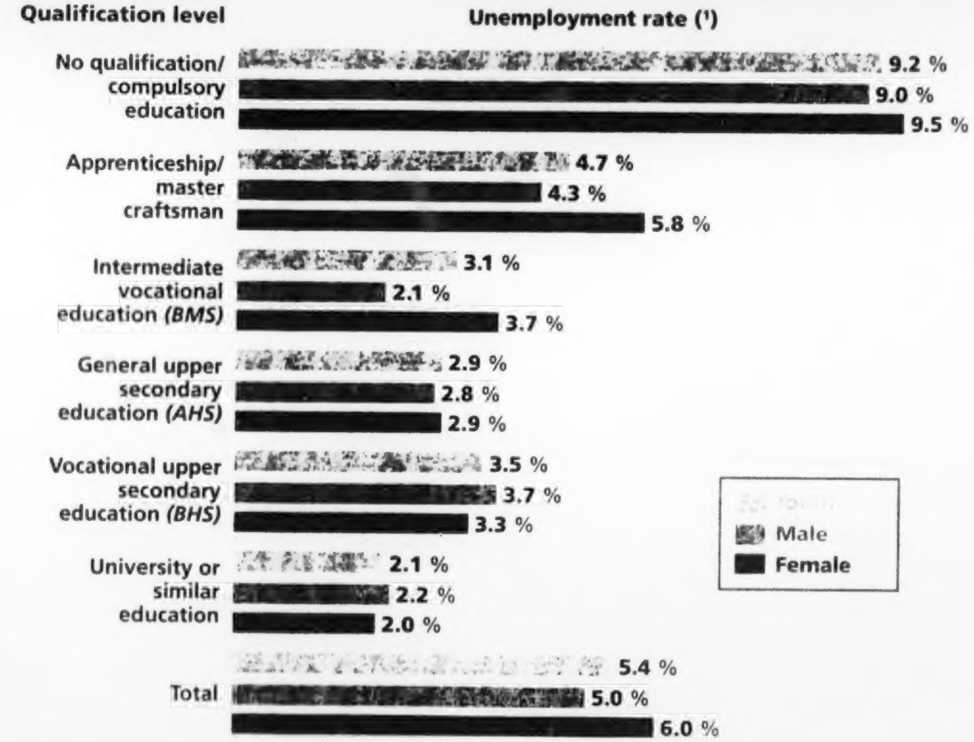
1.2.3. Unemployment

After severe setbacks in the early 1980s, the labour market recovered visibly during the second half of the decade. This recovery, however, proved to be only short-lived. Despite a pronounced expansion in employment, a plentiful supply of labour prevented any reduction in unemployment. The unemployment figure, which had fallen in 1988 for the first time since the economic slowdown of the early 1980s, showed a further slight fall in 1989, only to rise rapidly again in 1990 to more than cancel out the short-lived gains of the previous two years. Women benefited more than men from the expanding labour market of the 1983–90 period, the female fraction of total wage and salary earners increasing over this seven-year period from 40.6 % to 41.3 %.

The unemployed figure has risen further since the brief relaxation in 1987/88, reaching a provisional peak at 222 265 or 6.8 % in 1993 (OECD calculation: 4.2 %). The subsequent years brought only a slight reduction. The average number of jobseekers in 1995 was 215 716, representing an unemployment rate of 6.6 % (OECD calculation: 3.8 %). By 1996 the average jobless figure was 230 507 and the unemployment rate 7.0 % (OECD calculation: 4.1 %).

The discrepancies in the unemployment rates cited result from different computation methods. The figures supplied by the Public Employment Service are computed by taking the number of persons officially registered as unemployed and setting this number in relation to the total number of jobs subject to social insurance legislation. The statistics compiled at international level on the basis of International Labour Organisation (ILO) recommendations, by contrast, do not necessarily require a person to be registered as unemployed to qualify as such for statistical purposes and also take as their statistical universe the entire potential workforce. Further details, in particular on minimum hours worked per week, would extend beyond the scope of this publication.

Figure 6: **Unemployment rate by gender and highest qualification level, 1990**



(1) Unemployment rate cited by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs.

SOURCE *FEDERAL MINISTER FOR WOMEN (BUNDESMINISTERIN FÜR FRAUENANGELEGENHEITEN) OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR (BUNDESKANZLERANT).*

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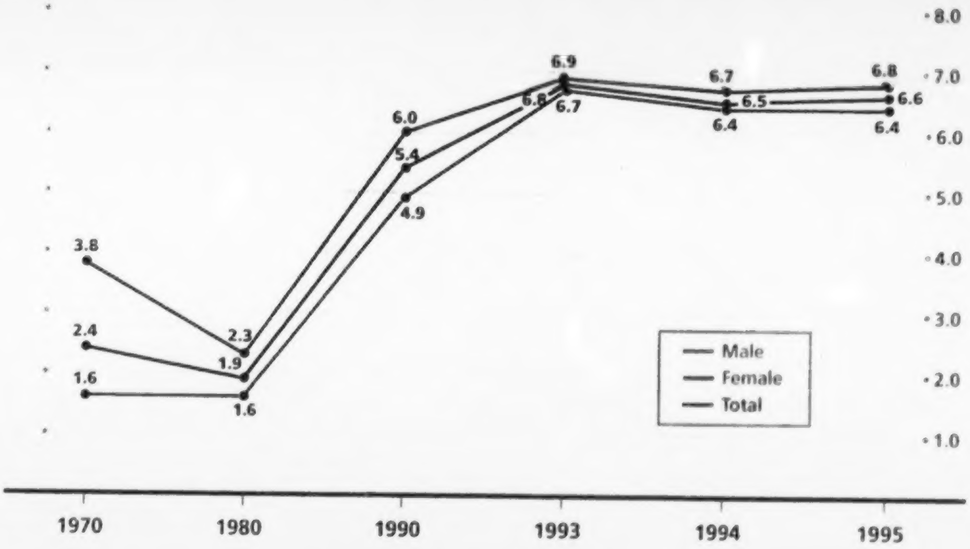
Figure 7: **Unemployment rate, 1970 - 95, by gender (in per cent)**



SOURCE *AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT), STATISTISCHES JAHRBUCH 1996.*

To slow down the rising unemployment trend, the Government began to make some fundamental changes to its labour market policy from 1990 onwards.

- From 1991/92 new regulations and amendments to unemployment insurance legislation were enacted in an effort to influence individual attitudes and thus reduce 'voluntary' unemployment. The first changes were more intensive efforts in the field of job placement, with top priority being given to placement itself but with some provision also being made for training schemes for the unemployed. There followed more stringent conditions concerning the type of job offers unemployed persons could refuse without penalty. The next step was a severe cut in unemployment benefits, followed by the imposition of a longer waiting period — 26 weeks — for young people to claim unemployment benefit.

- In 1992 and 1993 the state monopoly on job placement was abolished, creating scope for private-sector recruitment agencies to be set up.

- In 1994 the Federal Government launched a 'Special programme to stabilise the economy and employment' in an attempt to attenuate the impact of the previous years' drastic cutbacks in funding; the special programme involved an additional appropriation of ATS one billion.

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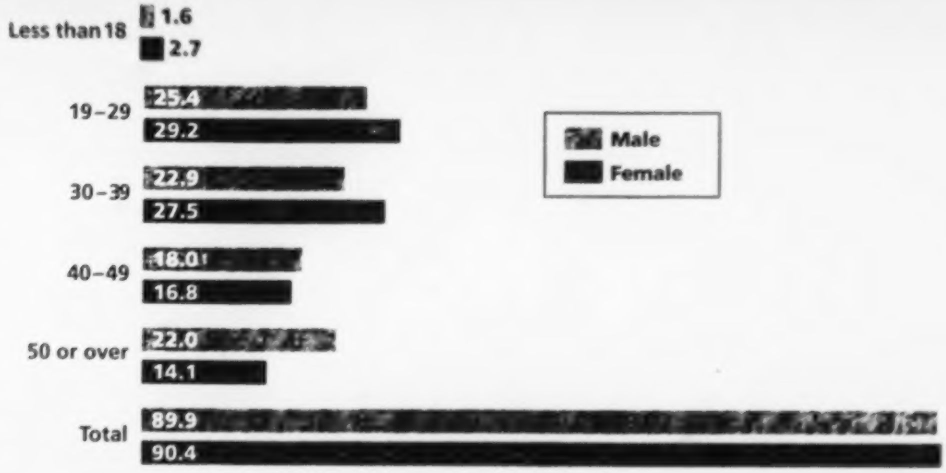
Figure 8: **Unemployment by gender and age group, 1995 (in thousands)**



SOURCE: AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT), STATISTISCHES JAHRBUCH 1996.

1.2.4. Long-term unemployment

Over the period 1976-95 the number of long-term unemployed has risen — alongside the number of registered unemployed in general — from approximately 22 000 to 65 274. The term 'long-term' unemployed refers to persons who have been registered as unemployed for at least six months.

Severely hit by long-term unemployment are older persons, with more than one third of all long-term unemployed falling within the over-50 age group. In the 19 to 29 age group, women account for a particularly large percentage of the age-group who have been registered as unemployed for at least one year: 3 133 of the 4 677 unemployed in this category — over two thirds — are women.

Political action was taken when a drop became apparent in the age limit beyond which people are considered to be unlikely to be placed in jobs. In line with the priority attached to policy support for 'older unemployed persons' various measures were introduced in 1993 geared to easing the situation of older workers, e.g. compulsory reporting of imminent redundancy and changes to the unemployment benefits regime for the over-50s and persons considered to be definitively unplaceable. A reform of the Unemployment Insurance Act brought greater material security for claimants of the social benefit payable after expiry of unemployment benefit, by doubling the exempt income allowance of relatives of claimants over 50 and tripling that allowance in the case of claimants over 55 years of age.

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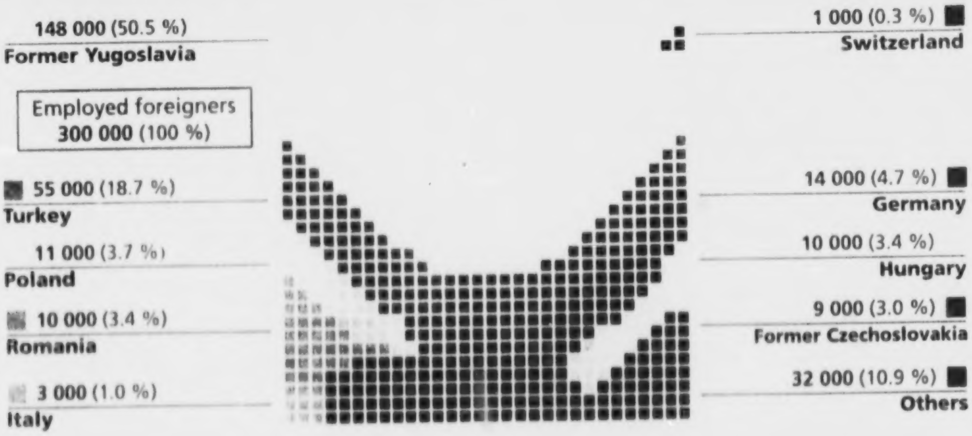
1.2.5. Foreign labour

A total of 300 303 non-nationals were working in Austria in 1995. From the geographical viewpoint, the main magnet for foreign labour is the federal capital: more than one third of all foreign workers (105 051 persons) have found employment in Vienna. The number of foreign workers has almost trebled since 1970, from 111 715 in 1970 to 174 712 in 1980 and 217 610 in 1990. Increments of some 50 000 foreign workers were recorded annually in the years 1989, 1990 and 1991, a rise which caused the Government to start taking measures to control the influx of migrant workers and asylum-seekers. In 1993 the inflow of foreign workers was further reduced to 3 600 per year.

In all, 340 000 work permits were issued in 1992; only 110 000 of these were issued to women. Foreign workers accounted for 9.1 % of the total working population, and the unemployment rate among foreign nationals was 16.1 %, a rate which remained relatively stable until 1995.

Figure 9: **Foreign job-holders by nationality, 1995 (¹)**



(¹) In rounded figures.

SOURCE: *FEDERAL CHAMBER FOR WORKERS AND EMPLOYEES (BUNDESKAMMER FÜR ARBEITER UND ANGESTELLTE).*

1.3. The economy

1.3.1. General information

Austria's economy fell into step with Europe's generally positive economic trend at the end of the 1980s. Real growth rose by 4.1 % in 1988, by 3.8 % in 1989 and by 4.2 % in 1990. This positive trend took a downturn from 1991 on, with growth falling to only 0.4 % in 1993 but climbing to 1.8 % in 1995. The unemployment statistics (see Section 1.2.3) reflect the positive results of the late 1980s and the subsequent trend reversal.

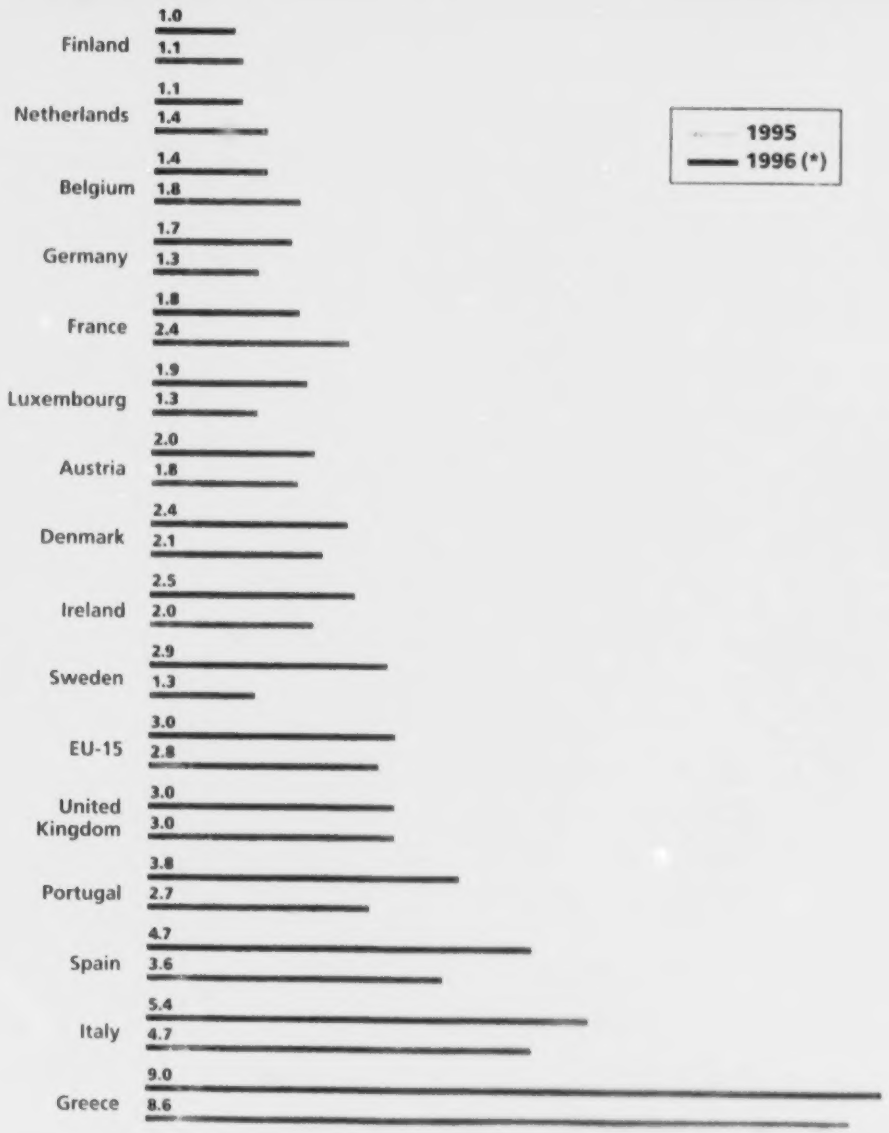
The Austrian economy is predominantly a small and medium-sized enterprise economy. Almost one in every four trade businesses (23.8 %) employs no salaried staff at all. Only 0.12 % of all companies employed a workforce of over 500 in 1994.

The trend towards a service society, already apparent from the sectoral analysis, can also be detected from other aspects of a global structural analysis. Within the private consumption sector, the highest growth rates in both nominal and real terms are achieved by the service-intensive sub-sectors, i.e. education, entertainment and recreation, transport and communications, and health and personal care. Particularly clear evidence of the trend towards a service society can be found in the long-term shifts in the structure of dependent employment.

Whereas in the early 1970s the secondary and tertiary sectors had accounted for approximately equal percentages of total dependent employment, by 1980 the tertiary sector had increased its share to approximately 55 % and by 1994 to over 64 %. In 1994 the secondary sector employed only 35 % of all wage and salary earners.

1.3.2. Some economic statistics

Figure 10: **Comparison of inflation rates in the EU, 1995 and first half of 1996**



(*) Estimated.

SOURCE AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT), STATISTISCHES JAHRBUCH 1996.

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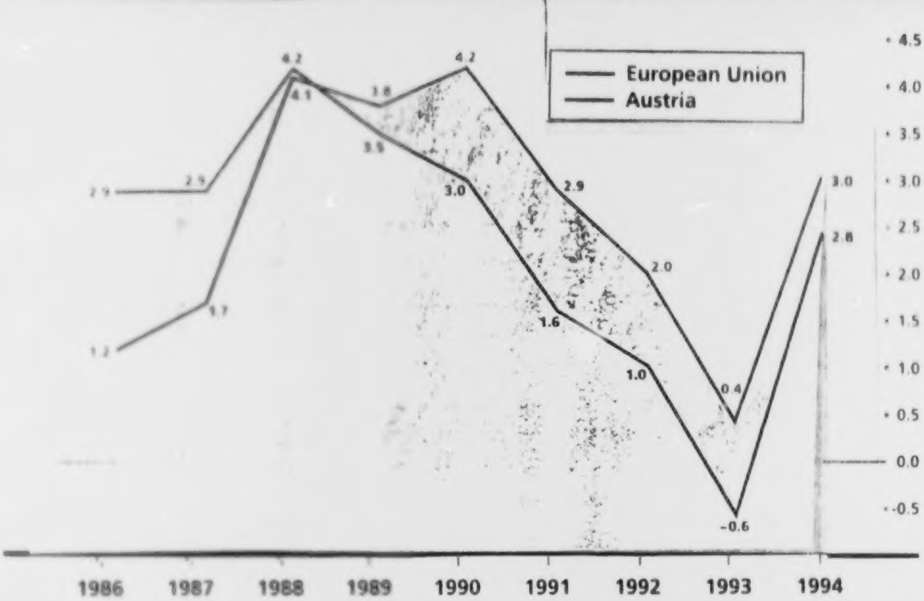
Figure 11: **Gross domestic product: real annual growth (in per cent)**



SOURCE **FEDERAL CHAMBER FOR WORKERS AND EMPLOYEES (BUNDESKAMMER FÜR ARBEITER UND ANGESTELLTE).**

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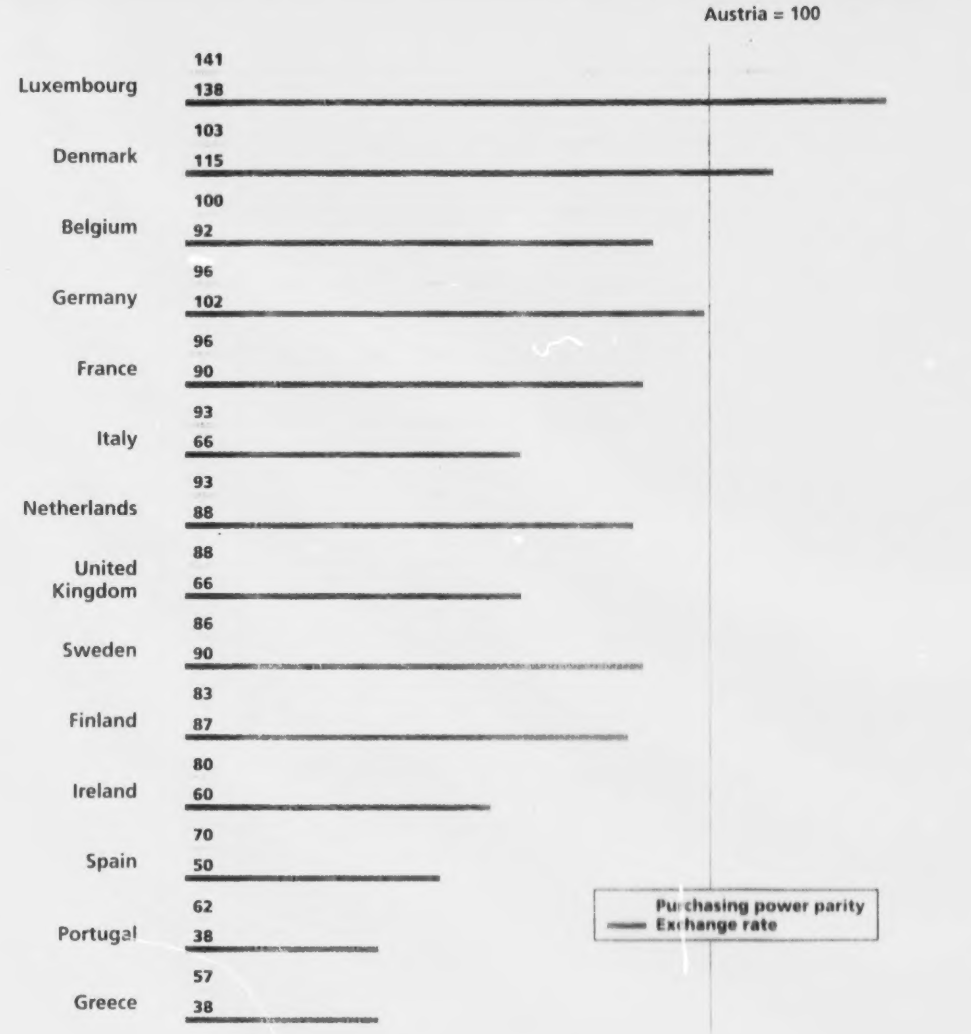
Figure 12: **Gross domestic product per capita, in purchasing power parities and exchange rate, 1995**



SOURCE AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT), STATISTISCHES JAHRBUCH 1996.

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Chapter 2
Structure of the education system

2.1. Overview

During the course of its long history the Austrian education system acquired a heterogeneous structure which was not standardized nationwide until the passing of the Organisation of Schooling Act (*Schulorganisationsgesetz*) in 1962. Nevertheless, some differing elements still exist within this 'uniform' system. For example, the education system is organised on the basis of pupil age and maturity on the one hand (vertical structure) and on a range of learning goals on the other, a diversity which has given rise to a large number of different types of school (horizontal structure).

The Austrian education system is regulated by a number of pieces of legislation, for example the Compulsory Education Act (*Schulpflichtgesetz*), which lays down the provisions governing compulsory general education, the Organisation of Schooling Act (*Schulorganisationsgesetz*), which gives a detailed description of, and systematic structuring for, most types of school, and the Religious Instruction Act (*Religionsunterrichtsgesetz*), which reformed religious instruction in schools in 1962. Other pieces of relevant legislation include the Private Schools Act (*Privatschulgesetz*), which regulates the establishment and management of private schools and private residential accommodation for pupils, and the Family Support Act (*Familienlastenausgleichsgesetz*), which lays down the provisions governing material support for pupils or their parents in paying for school travel, residential accommodation and textbooks.

Education is compulsory for all children permanently resident in Austria, including non-Austrian nationals, and aims to allow all children to reach a certain educational standard. The duration of compulsory education was extended from eight years to nine by the 1962 education legislation. Completing the prescribed period of compulsory education is a precondition for starting an apprenticeship, which in turn marks the beginning of compulsory vocational education.

Instruction in schools takes place on the basis of state-regulated curricula which specify the material to be covered in the various types of school and the stage at which such material is to be tackled. School curricula are valid nationwide.

Successfully completing the course at one level of education is generally a precondition for proceeding to the next higher level.

School-leaving, matriculation and other final or qualifying examinations are conducted by examination boards and generally entail both a written and an oral examination. Examinations are more or less uniform nationwide in order to ensure comparable qualification standards.

2.2. Pre-school and compulsory education

2.2.1. Pre-school education

The nursery school (*Kindergarten*) is the traditional form of pre-school education in Austria, catering for children between three and six years of age. A total of 210 940 children were enrolled at nursery schools in 1996. Attendance is a matter for voluntary parental decision. The main aims are to promote all aspects of the child's personality development and to prepare the child for schooling. Special additional provision is made for children who have reached the age of six and are thus subject to compulsory education, but are not yet ready for school. This additional provision takes the form of pre-school classes. Pre-school classes can also be attended by children who were admitted to school too early and subsequently downgraded. Unlike the nursery schools, the one-year pre-school classes form part of the formal education system.

2.2.2. Primary education

From the age of six years on, children who are sufficiently mature to attend school are subject to compulsory school attendance. The primary school (*Volksschule*), which receives the six-year-old intake, covers four grades and is required to provide all children with a uniform basic education and prepare them for moving on to more advanced education. In the 1995/96 school year 382 901 children were attending primary. Integration classes in regular primary schools and special schools are available for children with special needs.

2.2.3. Lower secondary education (secondary level I)

Apart from the small percentage of children attending a special school or a special extended primary education scheme, pupils attend one of two types of lower secondary institution:

- a lower secondary school (*Hauptschule*) or
- the first cycle of a general secondary school (*Unterstufe der allgemeinbildenden höheren Schule - AHS*)

In the 1995/96 school year 267 093 pupils were attending a lower secondary school. The admission requirement is successful completion of the fourth grade. Lower secondary schools cover grades 5 to 8 and are intended to equip pupils with a general education beyond the elementary level and to prepare them for adult society and for proceeding to post-compulsory education.

Special lower secondary schools with a strong emphasis on music or sport are available for pupils with a keen interest in these respective fields. Since the 1985/86 school year pupils have been divided into three streams for the subjects German, mathematics, and a modern foreign language. The performance level expected of the top stream is equal to that of pupils in the first cycle of general secondary education.

General secondary schools are required to provide pupils with a broad-based and thorough general education. Admission is conditional on completing the fourth grade of primary education and obtaining a high mark for school attainment. The first cycle of general secondary education is available in the following fields:

- general education (*Gymnasium*),
- technical education (*Realgymnasium*),
- commercial education (*Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium*).

The curricula for the first and second years are identical for all the above-mentioned types of general secondary education; the differentiation begins in the third year.

After four years of lower secondary school or four years in the first cycle of general secondary education, pupils can choose between the following types of schooling:

- pre-vocational course (*Polytechnische Schule*),
- secondary technical and vocational school (*Berufsbildende mittlere Schule*) (¹),
- secondary technical and vocational college (*Berufsbildende höhere Schule*) (¹),
- child care training college (*Bildungsanstalt für Erzieher*) (¹),
- nursery teacher training college (*Bildungsanstalt für Kindergartenpädagogik*) (¹),
- general upper secondary college (*Oberstufenrealgymnasium*) (¹).

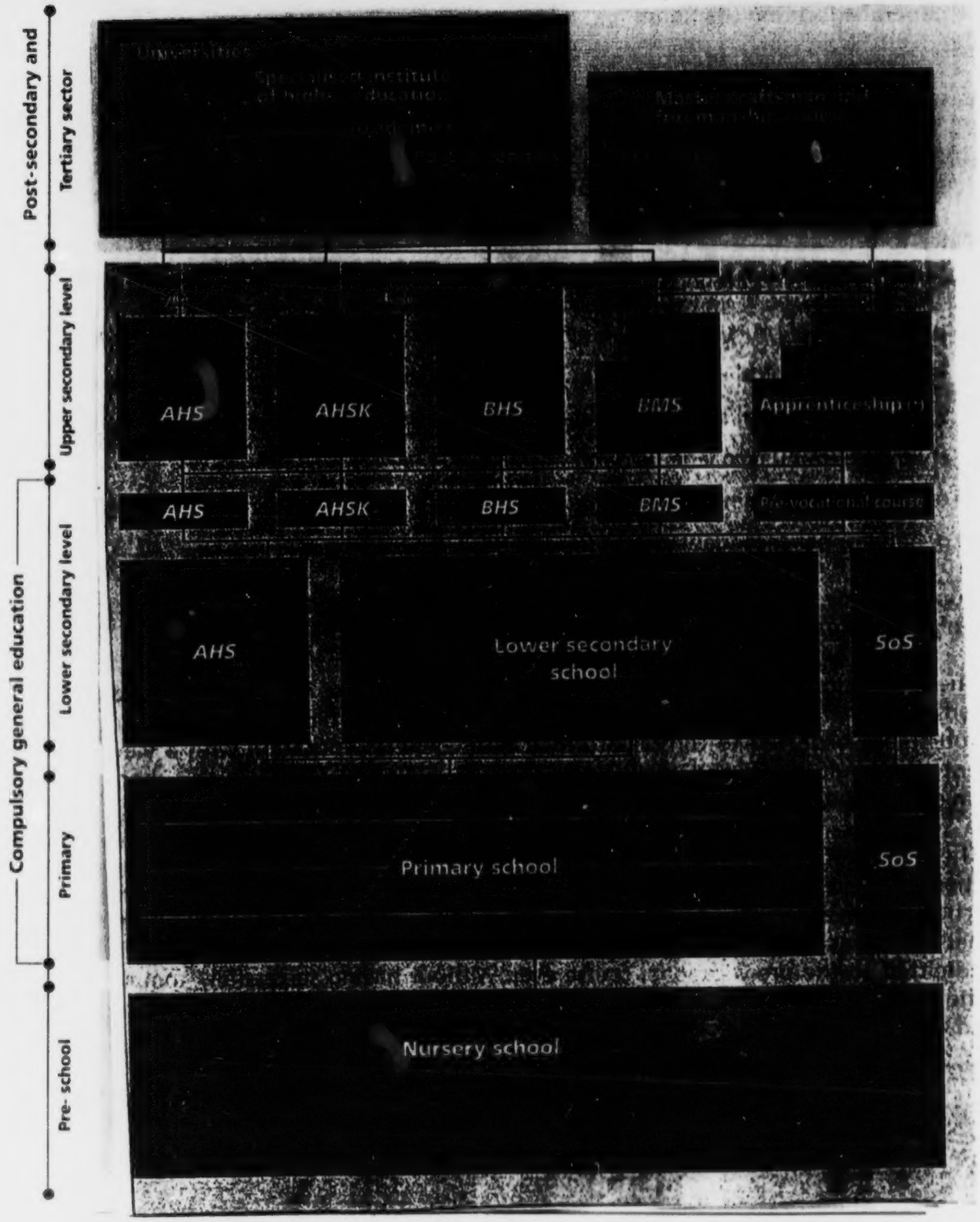
Pupils already attending a general secondary school (*AHS*) additionally have the possibility of remaining at the same school and proceeding to the second cycle.

The pre-vocational course was introduced into the system in 1962 in connection with the extension of compulsory education from eight to nine years. Pupils on this course are expected to consolidate their basic general education with a view to entering adult society and working life; they are also given counselling on choosing an occupation.

The pre-vocational course is compulsory for all pupils who opt against spending their ninth year of compulsory education at an intermediate or upper secondary school or have not already completed nine years of compulsory schooling by having had to repeat one of the grades of primary or lower secondary education. Pupils are admitted to the pre-vocational course even without having successfully completed the fourth year of the lower secondary school or the first cycle of general secondary education.

(¹) Not compulsory, but suitable for completing the ninth year of compulsory education.

Figure 13: The Austrian education system


Post-secondary and Tertiary sector
Upper secondary level
Lower secondary level
Primary
Pre- school
Compulsory general education
Universities
Specialised institute of higher education
AHS
AHSK
BHS
BMS
Apprenticeship (*)
AHS
AHSK
BHS
BMS
Pre-vocational course
AHS
Lower secondary school
SoS
Primary school
SoS
Nursery school

AHS	General upper secondary education, long cycle
AHSK	General upper secondary education, short cycle
BHS	Secondary technical and vocational colleges including training colleges for nursery school teachers
BMS	Secondary technical and vocational schools
SoS	Special (needs) school

Matura qualification
▨ Technical matriculation qualification
▨ Lateral access matriculation qualification

(*) See Table 3.

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2.3. General upper secondary education

The purpose of general upper secondary education is to provide pupils with a comprehensive and thorough general education and to qualify them for the *Matura* examination. General upper secondary schools build on the four-year lower secondary course and themselves offer a four-year course (grades 9 to 12). A total of 180 496 pupils were attending this type of school in the 1995/96 school year. The basically threefold structure of general secondary education is subdivided further at upper secondary level:

- general education (*Gymnasium*): humanities, modern languages, mathematics, natural sciences;
- technical education (*Realgymnasium*): natural sciences, mathematics;
- commercial education (*Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium*).

An independent alternative to this eight-year course of general secondary education is the short cycle of upper secondary education, grades 5 to 8, which can be laterally accessed after completion of the fourth grade of lower secondary or the first cycle of general secondary education.

The decision on the type of education to which a pupil is to proceed is usually taken one year before completion of compulsory education. Analysis of the intake rates and class composition in the first year of any sector of upper-secondary education shows that considerable shifts do take place at this stage, sometimes involving a reversal of the original decision. It emerges, for instance, that at least 27 % of all youngsters starting an apprenticeship come directly from general upper secondary education (*AHS*) and secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges (*BMS* and *BHS*).

Table 2: **Transfer rates, 1995**

From	To	%
First cycle of general secondary education (*AHS*)	Second cycle of general secondary education	65.3
	Vocational upper secondary education (*BHS*)	28.1
	Vocational intermediate education (*BMS*)	2.8
	Others/not known	3.8
Lower secondary education (*Hauptschule*)	Second cycle of general secondary education	6.6
	Vocational upper secondary education (*BHS*)	28.4
	Vocational intermediate education (*BMS*)	19.0
	Apprenticeship	11.9
	Pre-vocational course	24.8
	Others/not known	9.3

SOURCE: BMUK (EDITED): KENNDATEN DES ÖSTERREICHISCHEN SCHULWESENS. ZITREIHEN UND SPEZIELLE AUSWERTUNGEN SCHULJAHR 1995/1996, FEBRUARY 1997 EDITION.

Table 3: Educational background of pupils in reception classes in upper secondary education, 1995/96

Type of further education	Educational background	%
Second cycle of general secondary education (*AHS*)	First cycle of general secondary education	71.1
	Lower secondary education	19.4
	Others/not known	9.5
Vocational upper secondary education (*BHS*)	First cycle of general secondary education	23.3
	Lower secondary education	63.8
	Others/not known	12.9
Vocational intermediate education (*BMS*)	First cycle of general secondary education	4.2
	Lower secondary education	76.8
	Others/not known	19.0
Pre-vocational course	First cycle of general secondary education	1.1
	Lower secondary education	94.9
	Others/not known	4.0
Apprenticeship	General secondary education	4.6
	Vocational upper secondary education	8.6
	Vocational intermediate education	13.5
	Lower secondary education	19.0
	Pre-vocational course	41.2
	Special education	1.2
	Others/not known	11.9

SOURCE: BMUK (EDITED): KENNDATEN DES ÖSTERREICHISCHEN SCHULWESENS. ZITREIHEN UND SPEZIELLE AUSWERTUNGEN SCHULJAHR 1995/1996, FEBRUARY 1997 EDITION.

Chapter 3 The vocational education and training system

3.1. History

3.1.1. Development up to 1990

3.1.1.1. Apprenticeship (*Lehre*)

The contemporary structure of Austria's vocational education and training system has to be seen largely as the product of a long historical process. Occupations are highly structured and regulated and can usually be practiced only with a prescribed formal vocational qualification. This is reflected not only in a stringent control of persons setting themselves up in business but also in a differentiated range of education and training courses at secondary level.

The roots of systematically provided training in Austria can be traced back to mediaeval times when, in addition to the exclusively school-based training provided by monastic institutions, the various craft guilds set up their own apprenticeship schemes. Moving away from the previously rather haphazard approach to imparting the knowledge and skills needed for pursuing a trade, the guilds laid down a precisely structured system of apprenticeship. They paid careful attention to ensuring that the rules on the conditions, duration, and structure of training, and the rights and obligations of the master craftsman, were complied with in full and that possibilities were thus opened up for the apprentice to proceed further and ultimately qualify as a journeyman or master craftsman.

During the 18th and particularly the 19th century the structures of this previously highly systematised guild-run form of training for the younger generation became increasingly blurred. Economic and political changes and the espousal of a liberal economic philosophy eroded much of the former significance of the guilds. This finally necessitated placing the power for supervising apprenticeships in the hands of public institutions. The 19th century brought the introduction of Sunday classes, which were held to supplement the training undergone at the workplace. The Sunday classes were a forerunner of the 'supplementary instruction' schools, which were ultimately to supersede them in the second half of the 19th century. Since 1897 every apprentice in Austria has been obliged to attend such part-time school-based instruction. The Lower Austrian Supplementary Instruction Act scheduled such instruction on a weekday rather than evenings or Sundays as had previously been the case; the other Federal States did not introduce this arrangement until after World War I.

The apprenticeship system is held in high esteem both in the public mind and by the main societal forces. This is reflected by the fact that neither during the debate on the drafting and subsequent amendment of the 1969 Initial Vocational Training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz*), nor in connection with the preparation of the 1962 Organisation of Schooling Act (*Schulorganisationsgesetz*) was the system as such ever called into question.

Figure 14: Development of the vocational education and training system in Austria

1758	Imperial and Royal Academy of Draughtsmanship
1759 ▼ 1773	
1774	Introduction of general compulsory education
1775 ▼ 1858	
1859	Trade Regulation Code
1860 ▼ 1869	
1870	State school of trade and industry and intermediate technical schools
1871 ▼ 1896	
1897	Introduction of compulsory attendance at vocational school for apprentices
1898 ▼ 1919	
1920	Regulation on apprentice allowances and retention of former apprentices by employers
1921 ▼ 1961	
1962	Organisation of Schooling Act Extension of compulsory education to nine years
1963 ▼ 1968	
1969	Initial Vocational Training Act
1970 ▼ 1974	
1975	Fifth amendment to the Organisation of Schooling Act
1976	
1977	
1978	Amendment to the Initial Vocational Training Act
1979 ▼ 1986	
1987	Pilot training scheme: shorter apprenticeships for holders of *Matura* qualification
1988 ▼ 1992	
1993	Fourteenth amendment to the Organisation of Schooling Act: autonomy for schools in the vocational education sector Amendment to the Organisation of University Education Act
1994	Federal legislation establishing a university centre for continuing training: Donau Universität Krems Public Employment Service Act
1995	Establishment of specialised institutes of higher education
1996	
1997	Amendment of the Trade Regulation Code Examination for lateral access to higher education *(Berufsreifeprüfung)* Federal Government's apprenticeship package

Shortly after the end of World War II various efforts were made to incorporate the by then confusingly large number of regulations on apprenticeship into the newly reinstated Crafts, Trade and Industry Act (*Gewerbeordnung*). The trade unions' main criticism was that apprenticeship affairs were regulated in legislation which was tailored primarily to company management needs and that education and training was thus addressed only within this specific framework. But the 1952 amendment to the Crafts, Trade and Industry Act had already referred to an envisaged 'restructuring of statutory instruments governing vocational training in the commerce and industry sector'. Even before then, in 1949, the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry had drawn up a vocational training bill, and in 1951 the Austrian Trade Union Confederation and the Austrian Federation of Chambers of Labour had prepared a joint proposal for legislation on vocational training. Subsequently, it was not least the Federal Ministry of Economics, responsible for the Crafts, Trade and Industry Act, which developed a series of proposals to further the discussion and encourage further negotiations. Drawing on the experience thus gained and also on a basic agreement reached by the social partners, in 1967 the Ministry was finally able to draw up a draft proposal for a vocational training act which was then subjected to an intensive evaluation procedure. In 1969 this draft was adopted and became the Initial Vocational Training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz*); it entered into force on 1 January 1970.

Implementation of the Initial Vocational Training Act was entrusted to so-called 'apprenticeship centres' (*Lehrlingsstellen*) to be set up in all the Federal States. Each apprenticeship centre is run by the chamber of commerce and industry of the state concerned, which carries out this delegated function on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Economics. Limited consultation rights were granted in this connection to the statutory representatives of the workforce. Another new feature was the establishment of an advisory board for vocational training, which was later renamed the Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training *(Bundes-berufsausbildungsbeirat)*. This body is composed of equal numbers of representatives of the two sides of industry. Its mandate is to draw up expertises on regulations issued by the Federal Ministry of Economics within the framework of the Initial Vocational Training Act for submission to, and consideration by, the minister. The Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training is supported in its work by the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The discussion on how the apprenticeship system could be further improved did not end, however, with the passing of the Initial Vocational Training Act. In 1972 the Federal Ministry of Economics set up the Central Study Group on the Further Improvement of Apprenticeship, the terms of reference of which were to examine the practical impact of current regulations concerning apprenticeships and develop proposals for improvement. The members of the Study Group were representatives of the social partners. The mid-1970s brought an intensification of a debate on apprenticeship which had been initiated largely by the Austrian Young Trade Unionists with their 'Action 75' campaign. But the employers' associations were also undertaking various initiatives at the same time, for example publishing the brochure 'Proposals concerning apprenticeships in Austria' via the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry or the 'Education and training policy concept' via the Federation of Austrian Industry. In 1976 the Federal Ministry of Economics set up a working group composed of representatives of the two sides of industry and ministry officials and briefed it to develop fundamental guidelines for reforming the Initial Vocational Training Act. After lengthy negotiations, in 1977 the Ministry drew up a draft amendment to the Act which, after a few modifications introduced as a result of the consultation process, was passed by Parliament in 1978. The main innovations of the amendment concerned the setting up of a single apprenticeship centre per Federal State and of advisory councils on vocational training composed of an equal number of representatives of employers and trade unions to be attached to the apprenticeship centres. The qualifications required of training personnel were laid down and backed up by the introduction of an aptitude test. Work started on listing the subject matter to be compulsorily covered in each year of the various apprenticeships. The amendment also paved the way for pilot apprenticeships in a number of new occupations and for changes in the duration of training.

3.1.1.2. School-based vocational education and training

As apprenticeships in the crafts and trades developed, repeated attempts were made, from the 17th century on, to set up institutional structures which would lead to a school-based system of high-quality vocational education and training. One of the first steps in this direction was the founding of a number of academies, e.g. the Imperial and Royal Academy of Draughtmanship in 1758 and the Imperial and Royal Academy of Copper Engraving in 1766. The profound changes to economic and social structures which had been precipitated by a massive industrialisation thrust at the beginning of the 19th century further highlighted the need to create an adequate school-based vocational education and training system, in particular specialised schools catering for a particular occupational field and region, i.e. providing a supply of suitably trained young people for the regional labour market. Examples here are the schools of technical drawing established in Linz in 1837, in Graz in 1842 and in Vienna in 1846. Such schools were usually set up by private groups of industrialists or business associations. At this time, however, ideas along these lines were still far from being fully mature and there was no real concept of providing school-based education and training on a large scale.

A prominent figure behind the development of a structured vocational education system was the liberal education policy-maker Armand Freiherr von Dumreicher. As a senior official responsible for vocational education matters within the Ministry of Education and Schooling, the ministry which was to add vocational education to its portfolio in 1882, he proposed a comprehensive programme of reform which was to determine the future course of school-based vocational education and training in Austria. In accordance with Dumreicher's ideas, various secondary technical and vocational colleges — the so-called 'State high schools of trade and industry' — and specialised intermediate technical schools were set up between 1870 and the outbreak of World War I. The high schools of trade and industry generally had a four-year curriculum and prepared pupils for activities requiring a high level of theory (e.g. engineering design). The intermediate technical schools aimed to provide a more practical training suitable for pupils seeking the master craftsman or foreman qualification. Taken altogether, these intermediate and upper secondary vocational schools, plus the 'supplementary instruction' schools for apprentices referred to above, had already charted out the rough outlines of the three-pillar structure on which school-based vocational education and training still rests today. The reform of the largely privately run schools of commerce between 1880 and 1896 likewise resulted in a three-pillar structure for this sector: supplementary schools of commerce for apprentices, schools of commerce and colleges of commerce.

In 1918, at the end of World War I, Austria became a democratic republic. From the outset and throughout the inter-war period, Austria's education policy was strongly influenced by the contrasting views of the two main political parties of the day, the Christian Social Party and the Social Democratic Workers' Party. The reform ideas of the Social Democrats, associated with the name Otto Glöckel, could be subsumed under the term 'democratisation of schooling' and aimed to bring about a number of fundamental changes in both the internal and external organisation of schooling. The main features distinguishing the Social Democrats' education policy from that of the Christian Social Party were the formers' intention to introduce a single, uniform course of instruction for all 10 to 14 year-olds and their desire to cut back the influence of the Roman Catholic Church on the education system. The compromise finally reached on the organisation of schooling in 1927 required the Social Democrats to make a number of major ideological concessions.

The vocational schools remained largely unaffected by these reformist ideas and the changes actually made in the education system at that time. The only really decisive change, already referred to above (Section 3.1.1), was that the supplementary instruction for apprentices was henceforth to take place during working hours in all Federal States. One reason for the hesitation to reform the vocational education sector may be that this sector had been removed from the portfolio of the Ministry of Education in 1908. Other reasons were economic stagnation, unemployment, the world economic crisis, etc. The subsequent reversal of most of the school reforms by the government of the 'corporative state' which held power between 1934 and 1938 likewise had virtually no impact on the vocational education system.

The seizure of power by the National Socialists in 1938 had a major impact on the internal orientation of schooling and on the admission of both teaching personnel and pupils. The former Ministry of Education in Vienna was subordinated to the Ministry for Home and Cultural Affairs in Berlin. Denominational and private schools were closed down or compulsorily merged into the State school system. The obligation to attend religious instruction classes was lifted. Restrictions were placed on access to upper secondary and higher education, thereby effectively limiting the educational opportunities of large sections of the population.

Relatively soon after the restoration of a democratic system in 1945, which was accompanied by the reinstatement of most of the pre-1933 schooling arrangements, a discussion began on a fundamental reorganisation of the Austrian education system. This, however, proved to be largely a continuation, in only slightly modified form, of the education policy controversy of the First Republic, the protagonists again being grouped around the two main political parties, the Austrian People's Party and the Socialist Party of Austria. The main issues on which a rapprochement initially seemed impossible were the concept for intermediate education, the private (denominational) school sector, and the nature of training for teachers.

During this time, important preparations were being made for subsequent reforms to the vocational education system. The reforms which were subsequently carried out, however, fell short of the targets in many respects, and some of the ideas for reform have still not been implemented even today.

It was not until 1962 that objective political and economic imperatives combined to create the level of pressure required to again set a serious negotiation process in motion. A significant part of this pressure resulted from legal considerations: many aspects of the vocational education system seemed to have developed outside the constitutional principle of the rule of law and were governed on a somewhat haphazard basis merely by regulation. Because of this situation it could be argued that the reforms to the Austrian education landscape negotiated in 1962 were less an effort to implement a stringently formulated educational concept than pure pragmatism on the part of the main political parties. One indication of the parties' lack of confidence in being able to set up a genuine 'education partnership' is the fact that they simultaneously adopted a resolution requiring a two-thirds parliamentary majority for any amendment to legislation on schooling. This requirement has since been a heavy encumbrance to the legislature but has also ensured a certain continuity in education policy.

The 1962 legislation on education brought considerable changes to the external and internal organisation of the Austrian schooling system. In particular, the retention of more than one educational track for 10 to 14 year-olds (the lower secondary schools and the general secondary schools) represented an endorsement of the traditional structures of compulsory schooling in Austria at a time when other European countries were introducing the comprehensive school for this age group. The new legislation also introduced significant changes with regard to the role of schools in preparing young people for working life. The extension of compulsory schooling to nine years and the associated introduction of a new education track, the pre-vocational course, were intended to ensure that young people were better informed on and prepared for training for a skilled occupation. The pre-vocational course, however, is open only to ninth grade pupils who are not continuing their education at an intermediate or upper secondary school, i.e. youngsters who are aiming for an apprenticeship. These young people thus start their vocational training proper one year later than pupils who opt for a secondary technical and vocational school or college. One result of this anomaly is that many young people elect to spend one year at a secondary technical and vocational school or college or at a general upper secondary school in order to complete their compulsory education rather than attending the still controversial pre-vocational course.

For vocational education, the new legislation marked the first comprehensive reorganisation of the sector as a whole. It introduced a three-part structure: compulsory vocational schools for apprentices (*Berufsschule*) (the former supplementary instruction schools which had by then generally been upgraded to vocational schools), secondary technical and vocational schools (all regular and special types of specialized technical schools and schools of commerce), and secondary technical and vocational colleges (technical colleges, colleges of commerce, colleges preparing for service occupations, etc.). The course duration at most secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges was extended by one year, and the principle of covering both occupation-specific and general subject matter in the curriculum was established. Constantly rising pupil numbers, in particular in the upper secondary vocational education sector, demonstrated until well into the 1990s the validity of the concept underlying these vocational schools.

Because no agreement could be reached on reforming vocational schools in the agriculture and forestry sector, these schools initially remained unaffected by the new legislation, and even today not all aspects of vocational training in these sectors fall within the competence of the Ministry of Education. Special legislation, however, has since aligned this sector more closely with the mainstream structures and the provisions of the 1962 legislation. Further reforms were introduced by the 1990 Initial Vocational Training in Agriculture and Forestry Act.

A further pillar of the vocational training system was created in 1962: institutions of post-secondary education known as academies (or in some cases institutes). The fields of learning covered by such academies and institutes include the social sciences (preparing for senior social work positions) and education science (preparing for teaching in general and vocational education and also offering in-service training for teaching staff).

Despite some early criticism, the reforms did not call into question the validity of the apprenticeship format with its combination of two training venues — the company and the vocational school (*Berufsschule*), the so-called dual system. In the vocational schools, systematic efforts were made to make the instruction as occupation-specific as possible. One idea which had previously found support was abandoned, namely that of making vocational education compulsory for all young people not undergoing any training after completing compulsory schooling.

Subsequent amendments to the Organisation of Schooling Act have since brought a number of changes to the orientation and organisation of vocational schools. In 1975 the function of vocational schools was redefined, with explicit reference being made not only to imparting the theoretical knowledge associated with an occupation and complementing the in-company training component but also to broadening the pupil's general education. As, however, a lack of agreement between the social partners denied vocational schools the possibility of increasing the number of class contact hours, this broadened brief had to be diluted from the outset to little more than an appeal. In 1990 the Ministry of Education acted against the wishes of employers by increasing the percentage of training time spent at vocational schools for apprentices and at the same time introduced occupation-relevant instruction in a foreign language as part of the vocational school curriculum. Since 1984 some subjects of instruction at these vocational schools have been taught in two different achievement-based streams in response to the marked differences in attainment level among the pupil population.

3.1.2. Main reforms since 1990

3.1.2.1. Reforms in the dual system of initial vocational training

Improving general education

The 1990/91 school year brought the compulsory introduction of 'occupation-relevant instruction in a foreign language' (English) to the vocational school curriculum. The number of hours of instruction differs from one occupation and Federal State to another. The same curriculum amendment also introduced instruction in 'computer-aided technologies' for youngsters training for commercial or industrial occupations. This resulted in an overall extension of time spent at vocational school for approximately one third of all apprentices.

'German language and communication' was introduced as a compulsory subject in the 1993/94 school year. Two years later, 'German language and communication' was being taught on courses for 40 occupations, the number of instruction hours again differing from one occupation and Federal State to another. The aim here is to improve pupils' powers of articulation.

Increasing system permeability

The position of the dual system in relation to the overall education system and permeability between the two were addressed by the 16th amendment to the Organisation of Schooling Act which formally integrated vocational schools for apprentices into secondary education and made provision for special bridging courses to help pupils who have successfully completed the first year at vocational school transfer to vocational upper secondary education.

Pilot project: shorter traineeships for holders of the Matura *(general upper secondary) qualification*

A pilot project was launched in 1987 which allowed school-leavers from general or vocational upper secondary education who opt for an apprenticeship to shorten their training by one year. The project, which was initially restricted to apprenticeships for only a few occupations, was expanded in 1990 to cover all occupations with a training duration of at least three years. Its status was subsequently revised and the arrangement officially became standard practice on 1 July 1997.

Pilot projects in the metalworking and electrical/electronic engineering fields

Pilot training projects leading to the titles 'installations electrician', 'machine mechanic' and 'tool mechanic' were launched in Tyrol and Vorarlberg in 1989 and have been run nationwide since 1992. Based on the apprenticeships leading to state-recognised qualification as a plant electrician, mechanic and toolmaker, these new four-year courses were broadened to prepare apprentices for skilled work in the fields of electronics, and plant, machinery and tool construction. They were officially approved by the Federal Ministry of Economics as regular apprenticeships in 1997.

Introduction of generic apprenticeships

In response to the call for relevant training for broadly defined occupations, the social partners agreed to establish broader-based, generic apprenticeships with their own specialisms. The following have already been defined: communications technician (audio and video electronics, office communications, communications technology, computer systems and telecommunications); gas, water and air conditioning technician (gas-fitting, plumbing, heating and ventilation systems); concrete production (concrete goods production, concrete brick production, terrazzo production), and hollow glass processor (painting on and under glass, engraving, spherical glass products). Further generic apprenticeships (manufacturing technology, plant electronics, mechanical engineering, retail trade clerk) are currently under discussion or already being developed.

3.1.2.2. Reforms in school-based vocational education

More autonomy for schools, a subject long under discussion, became a reality in 1993 through the 14th amendment to the Organisation of Schooling Act. Schools now have greater independence and flexibility in terms of teaching policy, staffing, administration and finance, but these new attributes also signify greater responsibility, a need for economic efficiency, and co-determination in decision-making for teachers, pupils and parents. Curricula are thereby expected to become more closely geared to the needs of the regional labour market, so paving the way for specialisation. The leeway offered by the new arrangements can be made use of to the extent deemed appropriate for each school year.

Curriculum autonomy

Curriculum regulations prescribe, in a binding manner, the main elements of the common or core curriculum to be taught at all schools of any one category, with discretionary powers being granted to the individual school within a given framework. Within this framework a school can define certain parts of its coverage and choose or develop its own specialisations — always provided these discretionary elements comply with the general educational aims of the type of school concerned. The format for the new curricula is aptly described as a 'tree structure': all courses belonging to the same discipline must have a common core curriculum, and specialisation — the branches growing from the tree trunk — takes place in the final years of the course.

This is having a particularly strong impact on the teaching of technico-industrial subjects, a sector which currently has a highly differentiated structure and a high level of specialisation. Here, related curricula are being amalgamated into a single curriculum covering a broader field within which, subject to certain limitations, the instruction can be given a specific focus. The 'tree structure' is also relevant to other sectors of vocational education insofar as, here too, it helps promote a moderate degree of specialisation.

Teaching autonomy

In an effort to improve permeability between the various types of intermediate and upper secondary schools, entrance examinations were replaced by continuous assessment by teachers in 1992. A pupil's suitability for a particular school type can now be determined within the framework of this teaching autonomy.

The pupil number criteria for opening or splitting classes can be fixed locally within the framework of the school's teacher service time allocation. Schools can also make their own arrangements regarding the organisation of instruction (double lessons, project work, etc.).

Financial autonomy

The vocational education sector has for some time enjoyed considerable financial autonomy in managing the available funding. Schools are free to plan their investment requirements and, subject to approval by the education authority, — to raise funds — currently up to ATS 50 000 (ECU 3 685) on their own initiative. More financial autonomy is envisaged for the future. Funds to cover operating expenditures are to be allocated to schools annually, and schools will have the right to manage these funds autonomously on the basis of prescribed budgetary procedures.

More incentive to pursue economic efficiency is planned in the form of greater autonomy in the management of earmarked funds and the introduction of restricted legal capacity status.

Regulations and decrees on new teaching formats

The regulation governing matriculation examinations in the vocational education sector was extensively amended in December 1992. The amendment provided for a liberalisation in terms of school autonomy, for example it relaxed the administrative and teaching conditions governing non-standard instruction situations and allowed for account to be taken also of project-type work for the purposes of performance assessment.

Business management centres

The 1994 reform of the curricula for secondary schools for business administration and secondary business colleges brought the institutionalisation of practical training in business management centres (*Betriebswirtschaftliche Zentren*) affiliated to the school or college concerned. The aim here is to give senior pupils the possibility of applying their knowledge of commerce to simulated business situations. The instruction also takes place in so-called training firms (*Übungsfirmen*), virtual companies set up for practice purposes which were first introduced in 1990. By 1997 there were approximately 500 such school-based training firms in existence, and their number is still rising. Participation in the international market created by such training firms gives pupils opportunities to transact business with partners abroad and practise and consolidate their foreign language skills. Training firms are now an integral part of most secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges, and efforts are being made to encourage the remaining schools to adopt the concept. Austria's training firms are regarded both in Europe and elsewhere as examples to follow.

Project-based learning

Project work has been admissible in all vocational schools since 1991. From the 1996/97 school year on it has been possible for pupils at technical colleges to work on technical projects involving problems taken from working life in industry. A similar scheme has been set up for courses in foremanship and the construction trades, and from the 1997/98 school year on, so-called engineering projects are to be run on a trial basis at 20 technical and vocational colleges for engineering, arts and crafts. The aim of this new form of learning is to replace conventional school instruction with extensive project-based work carried out in teams. The teams are expected to solve technical problems taking due account of commercial and environmental considerations. Project-based learning can account for up to 30 or 40 % of instruction time during the final semester or final school year, and it can also replace some parts of the final examination.

Foreign language learning initiatives

Vocational education has been particularly responsive to the challenges of internationalisation since 1992, when a centre for the development of occupation-related language learning (*CEBS*) was established at the Federal Teacher Training Institute in Salzburg. *CEBS* provides training for teachers of foreign languages teaching on commercial and tourism courses and some courses lead to internationally recognised certificates (e.g. Certificate in English for International Business and Trade (CEIBT), *Diplôme de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris, Certificato Centro Linguistico Italiano Dante Alighieri Firenze*).

Foreign language courses have also been offered within the framework of in-service teacher training since 1994. The aim is to have foreign languages used more actively in instruction or even to have a foreign language used as the language of instruction.

European dimension

Pupils in vocational education have been participating in European Union programmes since 1995. In the Leonardo da Vinci programme, it was the short-term exchange schemes for apprentices and pupils which proved to be most popular in 1995 and 1996. Cooperation ventures have now been organised with all the Member States and also with Norway.

3.1.2.3. Specialised institutes of higher education *(Fachhochschulen)*

The education policy debate triggered by Austria's accession to the European Economic Area and the preparations for accession to the European Union concluded that Austria should also set up a tertiary, non-university sector, a sector which had previously been virtually non-existent outside teacher training and the social services sector. Because the entitlement to proceed to tertiary education in Austria is acquired predominantly via vocational upper secondary education and because the majority of persons holding such an entitlement at the same time hold a vocational qualification which is recognized within the meaning of the second EU recognition directive, for many years the opinion prevailed that there was no need to create a more practical, vocational alternative to universities (see also Section 3.2.2.2).

3.1.2.4. Universities

The policy programme agreements of the Austrian coalition parties of November 1994 and March 1996 called, inter alia, for prompt implementation of the new Organisation of University Education Act (*UOG*). This piece of federal legislation aims to strengthen university autonomy by means of extensive decentralization of decision-making powers. The organisational structure developed for the universities provides for a division of powers between collegiate bodies holding policy-making and supervisory competence as opposed to monocratic bodies holding limited decision-making competence. A clear allocation of powers and defined channels for decision-making and responsibility are intended to help universities successfully cope with their now considerably broader mandate (see also Section 3.2.2.3).

3.2. Initial vocational education and training

3.2.1. Upper secondary education (secondary level II)

General education accounts for the major part of all instruction up to the eighth grade. The ninth grade is a special case as it is available either as part of compulsory education in the form of the pre-vocational course (*Polytechnischen Schule*) or as the first year of an upper secondary education course. The most important choice in terms of training tracks is therefore that taken one year before the end of compulsory education.

The education system shows an increasingly differentiated structure at upper secondary level. A fundamental distinction can be made within the diverse range of opportunities described above between general (academic) and vocational education. The vocational education sector comprises full-time secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges. A second track is a dual-system apprenticeship, which combines in-company training with complementary instruction at a vocational school. The vocational education here, although compulsory, is not compulsory within the meaning of the general concept of compulsory education as it is compulsory only for apprentices. The introduction, in 1997, of a formal (examined) qualification (*Berufsreifeprüfung*) allowing for lateral access to higher education has, in principle, established equivalence between apprenticeship and upper secondary vocational education (see Section 6.2.2).

3.2.1.1. The dual system of vocational training (apprenticeship)

The characteristic feature of the dual system of vocational training is that the training takes place both on the employer's premises and at a vocational school. This system dates back to medieval times and has its roots in the apprenticeship training traditionally associated with the guilds (see Section 3.1.1.1).

The in-company training element is the main component of an apprenticeship, the purpose of the instruction at a vocational school being to supplement the occupational knowledge and skills acquired at the workplace with the corresponding theory and general knowledge. Apprenticeships thus involve two training providers, each with their own, differently prioritised teaching goals. The position of the apprentice is determined on the one hand by an apprenticeship contract which expresses a training commitment based on an employment contract, and on the other by his or her being subject to compulsory attendance at vocational school. The employer providing the training thus also has a dual function being simultaneously employer and trainer, and in addition to attending to regular business as an employer being duty bound to comply with the regulations governing the provision of training.

The training can therefore be termed 'dual' in several respects:

- it is provided at two venues: within the company and at the vocational school for apprentices (*Berufsschule*);
- there are two curricula: the training ordinance governing the in-company training and the vocational education curriculum governing the school-based training component;

- the funding setup: the employer funds the in-company training and the public purse funds the school-based training;
- the legal context: an apprenticeship based on an employment contract (within the framework of the Initial Vocational Training Act), and the statutory requirement for compulsory attendance at a vocational school for apprentices.

As the number of apprenticeship places on offer has been declining since 1996, schemes are now in place to offer employers publicly-funded financial incentives for providing additional places.

In-company training

In order to enter into an apprenticeship, the applicant must have successfully completed nine years of compulsory schooling. The training entitlement/obligation is formalised in the apprenticeship contract between the accredited training employer and the apprentice and is subject to the statutory provisions of labour law, social law and a number of special protective regulations such as those covering child and juvenile labour.

In principle, the accredited training employer is also the trainer. In practice, however, other suitable persons can be entrusted with training duties provided these have demonstrated their aptitude — ability to train and an understanding of psychology and training law — by holding either the aptitude for training qualification or the master craftsman qualification. Implementation of training is governed by various regulations (e.g. on the duration of training, occupational profile, ratios, training allowance).

At the end of the apprenticeship, apprentices can present themselves for final examination involving both a theoretical and a practical component. Apprentices who have successfully completed the final grade at vocational school are exempt from the theory examination. The subjects for examination are laid down in the examination regulation governing the occupation concerned. The accredited training employer is required to retain newly qualified ex-apprentices and employ them in the occupation for which they qualified for a period of at least four months after expiry of the apprenticeship, though various exemption provisions exist concerning this requirement.

School-based instruction within an apprenticeship (compulsory vocational education)

The task of vocational schools catering for apprentices is to develop in the apprentice a thorough understanding of the theory associated with his/her subject, to promote and complement the training undergone at the workplace and to broaden the apprentice's general education. It is of general interest to note that the number of school-leavers opting for a dual-system apprenticeship has been declining since 1980: whereas 197 782 apprentices were attending vocational school in the 1980/81 school year, the number had fallen to 132 616 by the 1995/96 school year.

The obligation to attend vocational school commences when the apprentice starts the apprenticeship and continues until the end of the apprenticeship. The number of years to be spent at school depends on the duration of training specified for the occupation concerned. The main part of the curriculum — some three fifths — is devoted to occupation-specific instruction, including practical work in workshops and laboratories. The remaining two fifths of curriculum time is spent on business studies and general education subjects. The skeleton curricula for this school-based instruction are issued by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs (*BMUK*), and these skeleton curricula are then fleshed out with detail by the federal State concerned.

Account has been taken of the heterogeneous nature of the pupil population since 1984 by means of a two-stream system dividing pupils by attainment for instruction in business studies and occupation-specific theory.

Vocational schools can organize their instruction in various ways: year-round instruction involving 1 to 1.5 days of attendance per week, a block system of 8 to 12 weeks of instruction per year, or a seasonal system with instruction concentrated into a particular season.

In addition to the vocational schools which cater for occupations in the craft, commerce and industry sectors and which are regulated by the Initial Vocational Training Act, Austria also has vocational schools for agricultural and forestry occupations which are regulated by the Vocational Schools of Agriculture and Forestry Act and the associated implementing legislation enacted by the governments of the Federal States. The range of activities covered by regulated apprenticeships in agriculture and forestry are reflected in the specialisations offered. These range from forest management to wine-growing.

Importance of apprenticeship within the education and training system

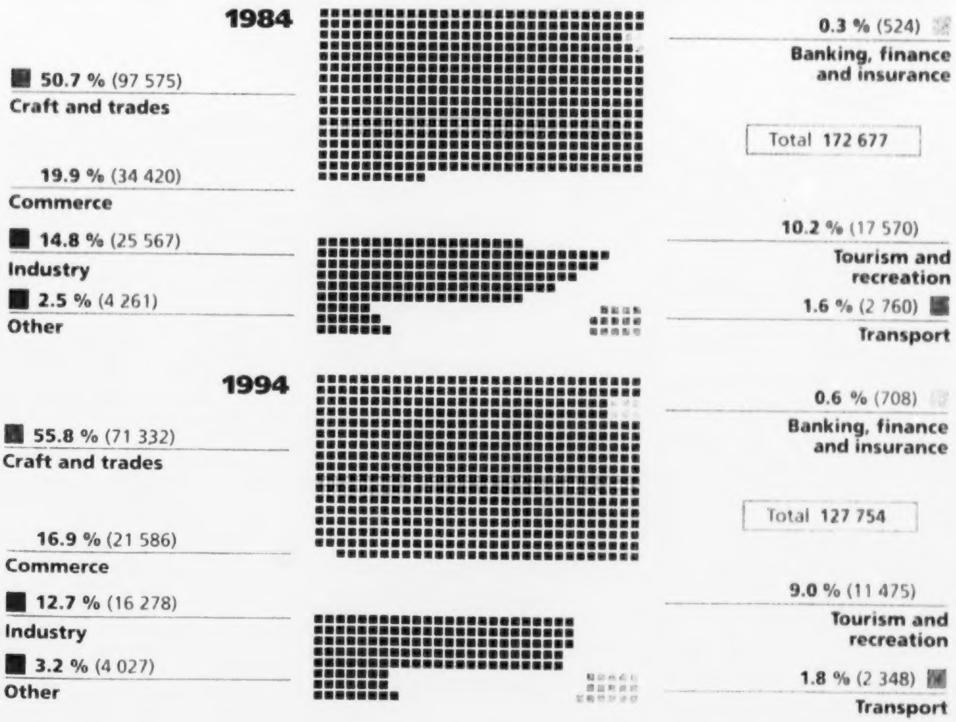
Generally speaking it is true to say that, irrespective of the criticisms levelled at some aspects of the system, Austria's apprenticeship concept is accepted and supported by all the major societal forces and the population at large.

Apprenticeship is the only form of post-lower secondary education which is open to all young people irrespective of their school achievement record (provided they have spent nine years in compulsory education). Theoretically therefore, an apprenticeship is as accessible to school-leavers with a poor school record as it is to those who have successfully completed all nine grades of compulsory education. In practice, however, experience has shown that a school-leaving certificate is today required for apprenticeships in most occupations. Moreover, this form of training is becoming increasingly attractive to non-nationals. Approximately 47 % of the 1993/94 school-leaver cohort underwent an apprenticeship, and given the heterogeneous composition of the apprentice population, the high pass rate (84.5 %) in the final examination is indeed surprising.

This positive picture, however, must be relativised somewhat: almost inevitably a 'ranking' exists among apprenticeship occupations which is reflected in different intakes from the various school types. Office and 'high-tech' apprenticeships tend to be taken up by young people with a better school record than apprenticeships in manufacturing or the construction industry. Moreover, the selection procedures (admission tests) used by larger employers in industry, banking and insurance suggests — even in the absence of reliable statistics — that company size effects a differentiation according to ability within groups of apprentices training for the same occupation.

Generally, however, it is true to say that in Austria (as indeed in Switzerland and Germany), the apprenticeship system has an eminent function in providing a mechanism for acquiring a recognised vocational qualification for the many young people whose needs cannot be met, nor interests satisfied, by the school system as it exists today. Employers, moreover, commend the system particularly for offering early exposure to adult working life and experience of corporate requirements (e.g. work pace, precision) under real-life as opposed to simulated conditions. The transition from apprenticeship to skilled employment (after the final apprenticeship examination) is thus less of a 'shock' than transition from the 'sheltered' confines of a school, even if the latter is facilitated by periods spent in industry, study tours of factories, and other forms of practical experience. The trade unions, however, emphasise that this experience of real-life conditions is only an advantage if the goals of training and the motivation to train are not called into question and undermined by the realities of day-to-day corporate operations.

Figure 15: **The apprentice population by economic sector, 1984 and 1994**



SOURCE *FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR WIRTSCHAFTLICHE ANGELEGENHEITEN).*

3.2.1.2. Secondary technical and vocational schools *(Berufsbildende mittlere Schulen)*

The learning goals for pupils in intermediate vocational education provided at secondary technical and vocational schools (*BMS*) are firstly to acquire a basic understanding of a particular specialised field (to skilled worker level), and secondly to consolidate and broaden their general education. A total of 68 396 pupils were in secondary technical and vocational schools in the 1995/96 school year. The eligibility requirement for secondary technical and vocational school education is successful completion of the eighth grade of schooling, though some exemptions do apply and in some cases an entrance examination is required. An aptitude test must be taken for admission to fine arts courses. Courses last one to four years depending on subject area. Much of the instruction takes the form of practical training in laboratories, training workshops, and training firms *(Übungsfirmen)*. In addition to instruction at school, courses also include one or more periods of compulsory training in an out-of-school work environment during the summer vacations. Exceptions here are commercial courses and courses leading to occupations in the services sector.

The certificate issued on completion of a vocational course lasting at least three years is regarded as being equivalent to the corresponding apprenticeship qualification. This equivalence is associated with minimum standards in labour law which are of relevance mainly to collectively negotiated remuneration schemes and social insurance rights. A successfully completed course paves the way to self-employment in a regulated occupation; any additional requirements are laid down in special regulations.

In principle, the holder of an intermediate vocational education qualification can proceed to a special preparatory or bridging course which in turn opens the door to the technical matriculation examination. However, such courses are offered only in response to demand, are not available for all subject areas and are not offered on a nationwide basis. Secondary technical and vocational schools can also offer adult education courses.

The main types of secondary technical and vocational schools are those providing training for:

- occupations in the industrial, technical and craft sectors;
- occupations in fashion and garment production;
- occupations in tourism;
- commercial occupations: clerical work, administration, commerce;
- occupations in the services sector (combining studies in commerce, domestic science and tourism);
- occupations in agriculture and forestry;
- occupations in the social service sector;
- occupations in the care of the sick (regulated by specific care sector legislation);
- medico-technical service occupations (regulated by specific care sector legislation);
- other occupations (e.g. personal care, animal care).

3.2.1.3. Secondary technical and vocational colleges *(Berufsbildende höhere Schulen)*

Secondary technical and vocational colleges (*BHS*) aim to provide pupils at upper secondary level with a general and occupation-related education, which enables them to carry out a highly skilled occupation and at the same time entitles them to proceed to higher education (dual qualification). Pupils in Austria are keenly aware of the good career prospects offered by this dual qualification: over the past 50 years, as pupil numbers in general compulsory education have fallen from 747 236 to 685 992, pupil numbers in upper secondary technical and vocational colleges have risen — despite the heavy workload for pupils — from 9 041 to 106 587, an increase far higher than in any other sector of education.

Admission to upper secondary vocational education is conditional on successfully completing the eighth grade, though some exemptions do apply and in certain cases an entrance examination must be passed. Admission to fine arts courses is subject to passing an aptitude test.

The curricula provide for equal amounts of instruction in general subjects, occupation-related theory subjects and practical work in workshops, laboratories, kitchens, etc. The course is full-time, extends over five grades and leads to the technical matriculation qualification (see also Section 5.1.1).

Pupils in upper secondary vocational education are required to undergo practical training in appropriate work environments during the summer vacations, the number and duration of such work experience periods being laid down in the curricula. For pupils on commercial courses, such work experience is not compulsory but only recommended.

A certificate attesting to completion of a course of at least three years' duration is regarded as equivalent to the apprenticeship qualification in the corresponding field; this equivalent status has implications concerning statutory minimum standards. Holders of the leaving certificate from a technical and vocational college for engineering, arts and crafts or college of agriculture or forestry are entitled to bear the professional title *HTL-Ingenieur* after gaining three years of relevant occupational experience. They also have the possibility of exercising a relevant craft without first having to obtain the master craftsman qualification.

The most important types of secondary technical and vocational colleges are:

- technical colleges (specialising in, for example, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, electronics, computer systems and organisation, construction technology, structural and civil engineering, chemical engineering, textile engineering);
- colleges of fashion and garment production;
- colleges of tourism;
- commercial colleges;
- colleges for occupations in the services sector;
- colleges of agriculture and forestry (specialising in, for example, agriculture, horticulture, wine and fruit growing, forestry, dairy production).

Special forms of upper secondary vocational education exist to build on prior occupational expertise. These post-secondary courses, usually of two-year duration, offer holders of a general or vocational upper secondary qualification the possibility of acquiring occupation-related expertise as an additional qualification or as an expansion of an existing, related qualification. Access to such courses is also possible on the basis of an entrance examination. Colleges operating in the upper secondary vocational sector can also run adult education courses.

3.2.1.4. Colleges of education *(Bildungsanstalten)*

The secondary sector also includes colleges providing training for the educational support and supervision of young children.

Colleges of social education

These courses lead to qualification as a supervisor of children and young people in after-school care centres and residential homes and also for out-of-school youth welfare work. Admission is dependent on successfully completing eight grades of schooling and passing an aptitude test. The courses last five years and lead to a matriculation qualification with the associated entitlement to proceed to higher education. Two-year courses are available for holders of the *Matura* qualification.

Colleges of nursery (Kindergarten) *education*

The admission requirements, training duration and final qualification here correspond to those at the colleges of social education described above. Here too, two-year courses are available for holders of the *Matura* qualification.

3.2.2. Tertiary sector

3.2.2.1. Non-university tertiary education

The main institutions in the non-university tertiary sector are the following:

Teacher training academies

Teacher training academies are classified by sector of education envisaged: general education, vocational education, agriculture and forestry education and religious education.
- Academies of general education provide training for persons intending to teach in the compulsory education sector (primary, lower secondary and special schools).
- Academies of vocational education develop the specialised knowledge and skills needed for teaching apprentices at vocational schools, for teaching home economics or a technical subject in intermediate or upper secondary vocational education, or for teaching word processing.
- The academy of education in agriculture and forestry trains students to teach in the agricultural education sector and also qualifies them for work in agricultural extension and promotion.
- Academies of religious education train students to become teachers of religious instruction.

A total of 8 703 students were attending these teacher training academies in the 1995/96 school year. The admission requirement is the *Matura* or equivalent matriculation qualification. Courses at academies of general education last six semesters, those at the other academies range between two and six semesters.

Social work academies

Training for social work occupations is provided in social science academies, and entails both a practice-oriented coverage of occupation-related subjects and the study of theory in humanities and social science subjects. The training is supplemented with periods of practical training in appropriate social work institutions. The regular course extends over six semesters, the evening course over seven semesters. The training is geared to holders of the *Matura* qualification, but access to the course is also possible via special bridging courses or aptitude examinations.

Academies of medical technology and academies of midwifery

Non-university training for occupations in the health care sector is available in seven disciplines (physiotherapy, medical technology, radiological technology, dietetics and ergonomic therapy, speech therapy, phonics and audiometry service, orthopaedics) at academies of medical technology and in midwifery at academies of midwifery. From the viewpoint of location and organisation, each academy is affiliated to a hospital, an arrangement which enables students to undergo practical training in a work environment.

The curriculum involves a theory-based medical component and an applied science component, with a large time allocation being set aside for practical exercises. A small section of the curriculum is reserved for instruction in various humanities and social science subjects. The training extends over three years. Applicants are required to hold the technical matriculation qualification or the diploma in basic nursing or, in the case of applicants for courses in physiotherapy, radiology, and medical laboratory technology, a diploma in medical technology.

Post-secondary courses in commercial studies

Post-secondary courses in commercial or administrative studies are usually run by technical and vocational colleges (*BHS*) and extend over four to six semesters. They are open to holders of the technical matriculation qualification. The main areas of study are business management, accounting, computer science and modern foreign languages. The courses are available in evening class format for persons in employment.

Post-secondary courses in technology

Most post-secondary courses in the technology sector are run by technical and vocational colleges and last between four and six semesters. Unlike the commercial sector, students here are required to undergo periods of practical training in a work environment. The main subjects offered are mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, electronics and communications technology, construction technology, textile technology, computer applications and organisation, and chemistry.

Post-secondary courses in tourism and leisure management

A four-semester post-secondary course is available for persons aiming for a career in the tourism and leisure management sector. The course covers the theory of tourism, catering and service, business management and modern foreign languages. Periods of practical training are compulsory during vacations.

3.2.2.2. Specialised institutes of higher education *(Fachhochschulen)*

Specialised institutes of higher education have been in existence in Austria since 1994. In addition to subject-specific competence, these primarily application-oriented institutes aim to develop interdisciplinary knowledge and skills and also social aptitudes. Over 40 courses have so far been set up in the technology, economics and tourism sectors. A total of 4 000 students were enrolled on such courses in the 1995/96 academic year.

Admission is open not only to holders of the *Matura* or equivalent matriculation qualification but also, subject to success in an entrance examination, to persons with other relevant qualifications. Included here are persons with appropriate work experience built on an apprenticeship qualification, an intermediate vocational education qualification, or a qualification from a specialised academy or a foremanship course.

The statutory minimum duration of courses at specialised institutes of higher education is six semesters, and this figure excludes the compulsory periods of practical training spent in a real-life work environment. Most courses currently in operation extend over a total of eight semesters. In line with their emphasis on qualifying for employment, provision has to be made on every course for recognition of preexisting knowledge and skills on the basis of credits which can render the student eligible for a study time reduction.

The courses lead to a higher education diploma (first degree) which is awarded to successful candidates after assessment of a dissertation and an examination conducted before an examining board. The diploma has the status of an academic degree and entitles the holder to proceed to doctoral studies at an Austrian university, though in this case the doctoral study period is extended by two semesters.

3.2.2.3. Universities

University education in Austria exists in two forms: ordinary courses and extraordinary courses. Access to ordinary courses is reserved for holders of a matriculation or equivalent qualification. A total of 216 820 students were enrolled at universities in the 1995/96 academic year.

Ordinary courses

Ordinary courses lead to the award of an academic qualification at one of two levels: first degree (diploma) or doctorate.

The objective of first degree courses is to equip students with an academic preparation for employment in a highly qualified position. First degree courses last between eight and twelve semesters and are structured in two parts. Courses end with final examinations and the submission of a dissertation.

The course of study leading to a doctorate is largely a continuation of the first degree course, with special emphasis being given to further developing the student's ability to approach a subject with a high degree of academic rigour. Study for a doctorate usually takes between two and four semesters. To qualify for the doctorate, the candidate is required to submit a dissertation of a much higher academic standard than that required for a first degree and also to pass an oral examination.

Alongside ordinary courses, universities offer a range of other courses: short courses and courses to enhance or enlarge existing expertise. The common feature of these courses is that they do not lead to an academic degree.

Extraordinary courses

In contrast to first degree and doctorate courses with their essentially academic approach, most university-based extraordinary courses have a strong practical emphasis. Admission requirements vary and are set individually by each university (*Matura*, first degree, professional experience). Extraordinary courses can be classified by the type of qualification to which they lead: graduates of extraordinary courses entailing at least 40 hours per semester week (i.e. at least 600 instruction units) can bear the title *'Akademischer ....'*, the second term denoting the subject of study. Graduates of a post-graduate extraordinary course entailing at least 70 semester hours can bear the academic title 'Master of Advanced Studies' (abbreviated to MAS) followed by an indication of the subject of study. Graduates of an extraordinary course in business management run to internationally recognised standards can bear the academic title 'Master of Business Administration' (MBA).

Courses of this type are currently being offered by virtually all universities in Austria. Approximately one third are in technical subjects, a further third in law and economics, and the remainder in the humanities, social sciences and medicine (see also Section 3.3.2.4).

Table 4: **Qualifications awarded and student outflows from the education system**

A. Secondary education, 1995

Apprenticeship qualifications	**43 344**
Trades and crafts	19 030
Commerce	6 662
Industry	5 459
Tourism and leisure	3 413
Transport	827
Finance and insurance	259
Non-chamber areas	1 090
Others	6 604
Matriculation qualifications	**32 538**
General secondary schools	13 971
Technical and craft colleges	8 344
Commercial colleges	5 668
Colleges for service occupations	2 517
Colleges of agriculture and forestry	599
Teacher and nursery teacher training colleges	1 374

B. University and other higher education qualifications, 1994/95

First degree qualifications	**10 227**
Theology	253
Law	1 311
Social and economic sciences	2 480
Humanities	2 426
Natural sciences	1 140
Technology	1 861
Mining engineering	126
Soil science	379
Veterinary medicine	196
Studium irregulare	55
Doctorate degrees	**2 714**
Medicine – study leads direct to doctorate	1 112
Doctorate degrees subsequent to first degrees	1 602

SOURCE: FEDERAL MINISTRIES, AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT), FEDERAL CHAMBER FOR WORKERS AND EMPLOYEES (BUNDESKAMMER FÜR ARBEITER UND ANGESTELLTE).

3.3. Continuing vocational training

3.3.1. Legal foundations for continuing vocational training

Generally speaking, adult education has no constitutional foundation in Austria. The closest it has got to date is a commitment in the 1929 amendment of the 1920 Federal Constitution Act to the effect that adult education is to be constitutionally regulated as the third pillar of the education system alongside schools and universities.

The 1867 State Constitution Act — principally here the commitment to freedom of teaching and learning and the right of association — became a determining factor for the structure of adult education when it was reaffirmed in 1945 in the Austrian constitution. Adult education institutions were set up not by the state but by private agents acting on behalf of a variety of social groups. Most were set up and organised with the legal status of a registered association. Only recently, with the increasing importance of the economics of education and professional management, have adult education institutions been set up with different types of legal status (e.g. as limited liability companies).

The state promotes continuing training by means of legislation and by allowing companies and private individuals to deduct expenditure on continuing training from their taxable income.

Decisive changes have taken place in continuing vocational training in Austria over the past decade. This is most apparent in the self-image of the relevant institutions and providers and also in the importance generally attached to continuing training. For example, in 1985 the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs set up a special unit within the ministry to deal specifically with adult education, the public library system and related services. This unit has its own policy department which is mainly concerned with promoting cooperation between schools and adult education and carrying out coordination functions in the 'second-chance' education and training sector. A desirable development would be a clarification of competences and the integration of adult education into the mainstream national education and training system.

In the Public Funding to Promote Adult Education and the Public Library System Act, adopted in March 1973, the state made a commitment to support adult education mainly by subsidies payable to associations, providing funding for innovative projects and having state agencies provide new services. The Act makes no provision, however, for any legal entitlement to such support. The benefits are in any case restricted to legal entities headquartered in Austria whose operations are non-profit-making and involve the continuous and pedagogically planned provision of educational services. The Act established special adult education promotion centres at State level to implement the federal legislation on a decentralised basis.

Special competences and responsibilities for adult education rest with the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. For example, the 1962 Organisation of Schooling Act affects continuing vocational training inasmuch as it regulates 'second-chance' education and training; the 1997 Lateral Access to Higher Education Act (*Berufsreifegesetz*) regulates the examinations for adults seeking lateral access to higher education; and the 1986 Access to Higher Education Act (*Studienberechtigungsgesetz*) (competent ministry: Federal Ministry of Science and Transport) regulates access to universities and academies for persons not holding the *Matura* qualification. In addition, universities and numerous adult education institutions offer various courses preparing adults for the examinations affording direct and lateral access to higher education.

Administrative tasks concerning adult education are carried out not only by the relevant departments at the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs but also by other ministries. For example, the Federal Ministry of Science and Transport is the administration responsible for the institutes for advanced interdisciplinary study and research at the universities of Klagenfurt and Linz, for the open university centre at the University of Linz, for university-based bridging courses for adults qualifying for access to higher education and for the continuing training centre at the Donau University Krems. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is responsible for promoting continuing vocational training in the agriculture and forestry sector.

The authority responsible for vocational counselling and special training schemes for the unemployed is the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs. The 1994 Public Employment Service Act (*AMSG*) regulates training, retraining, continuing training, etc. for integration into the labour market and thus has an impact which extends to the adult education institutions which deliver vocational training.

Whereas the Promotion of Adult Education Act provides support only for the operations of legal entities, the Public Employment Service Act offers support for individuals and certain population groups (women wanting to return to work, rehabilitees, disabled persons, non-nationals) and also for crisis-hit regions. Continuing vocational training is also used preventatively as an instrument to help persons whose jobs are in jeopardy to remain in employment. The general aim of most of these programmes is to raise job placement rates and to upgrade and adapt skills to keep abreast of technological innovation and structural changes in the economy.

Austria recognises no general legal entitlement either to continuing training or to educational leave. The Employment Constitution Act (*Arbeitsverfassungsgesetz*), however, does grant an entitlement to educational leave to members of works councils. Some industries have included the possibility of unpaid educational leave in industry-wide collective agreements. Some larger companies have voluntarily regulated the issue of educational leave, in particular for in-house training programmes, in company agreements.

In contrast to the absence of any national constitutional entitlement to adult education, some efforts have been made at individual Federal State level to legislate on the promotion of adult education.

3.3.2. Typology of continuing training providers

Austria has a well established continuing training market. Until recently, only a few institutes run by the social partners dominated the market, but now numerous private training providers and counsellors from within and outside Austria are taking their place alongside them. Externally sourced training and counselling personnel have already taken on a leading position in Austrian companies.

3.3.2.1. Training delivered by institutions affiliated to the Austrian Adult Education Conference *(KEBÖ)*

The *Konferenz der Erwachsenbildung Österreichs* (*KEBÖ*) brings together representatives of the traditional institutions of mainstream and adult education. From the quantitative viewpoint, the most important providers of programmes and courses in the continuing vocational sector are the economic development institutes affiliated to the chambers of commerce and industry, the occupational development institutes affiliated to the trade unions, the institutes for adult education in rural areas and the community-based adult education centres.

Economic development institutes (Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut — WIFIs)

The economic development institutes are bodies run by the federally organised chambers of commerce and industry. The target groups for their education and training programmes are apprentices, qualified skilled workers, all levels of managerial personnel, self-employed persons and persons wanting to set themselves up in business. The services offered range from ad hoc educational events, courses and seminars to corporate counselling, and focus on the following sectors: industry, trade, crafts, commerce, tourism and the leisure industry. The *WIFI*s regard themselves as providers of skilled manpower for the private sector of the economy operating with a twofold objective: to help companies overcome their manpower problems and to help individuals advance their own careers.

Occupational Development Institute (Berufsförderungsinstitut — bfi)

The Occupational Development Institute is a nationwide umbrella organization for all vocational training activities run by organisations representing the interests of the labour force (chambers of labour, trade union confederation, trade unions). It has autonomous centres in each Federal State. The objectives range from promoting occupational mobility and offering skill upgrade and retraining programmes for a broad spectrum of employees to developing new general and vocational education and training programmes to qualify people to cope with socioeconomic change and market their labour on appropriate terms. A notable development is taking place in Upper Austria, where out of the regional *bfi* has developed the Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Centre (*BBRZ*), a body which now plays a leading role nationwide in delivering initial training and retraining for disabled persons.

Institute for Adult Education in Rural Areas (Das Ländliche Fortbildungsinstitut — LFI)

The Institute for Adult Education in Rural Areas is an umbrella organisation, with registered association status, for regional committees established at Federal State level. At federal level its business is transacted by a special unit of the Standing Committee of Presidents of Chambers of Agriculture. The *LFI*'s target groups are mainly persons engaged in agriculture and forestry, and its programmes cover not only vocational training but also lifestyle and cultural development. Priority fields include agricultural and forest production, agricultural engineering, marketing of agricultural produce and economic, education and social policy issues.

Austrian Association of Adult Education Centres (Verband Österreichischer Volkhochschulen - VÖV)

The Austrian Association of Adult Education Centres is the umbrella organisation for the regional associations of adult education centres operating at Federal State level.

The courses offered range from general and vocational education courses to language courses, series of special lectures, and programmes to support second-chance learners.

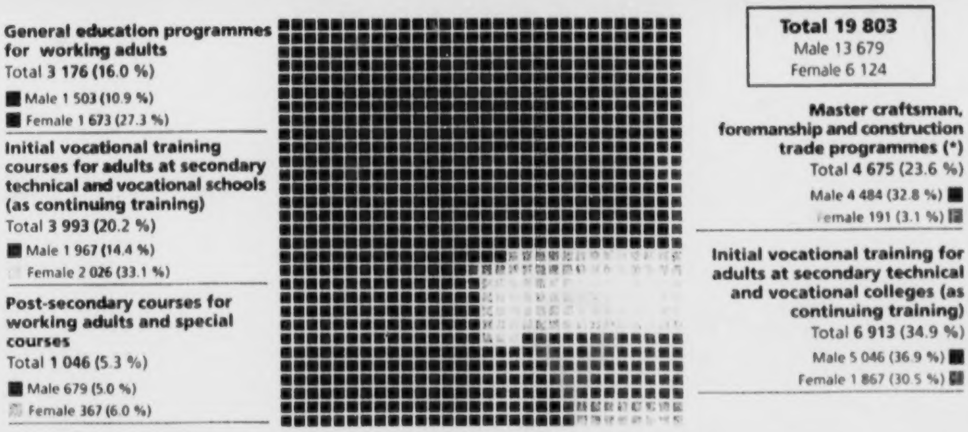
Alongside the organisations represented in *KEBÖ* there are a large number of other organisations of various formats which are likewise engaged in adult education. The Federal Academy of Public Administration (*Verwaltungsakademie des Bundes*), for example, is responsible for delivering initial and in-service training for public service officials; by analogy, most Federal States also have their own state academies of public administration.

3.3.2.2. Institutions and courses for adults within the mainstream education system

Austria has numerous institutions and courses for adults which deliver curricula in compliance with the Organisation of Schooling Act. On offer are both programmes allowing adults to obtain educational qualifications on a 'second-chance' basis and modular programmes for skilled workers organised specially for adults by secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges. For example, the long cycle for adults at a technical and vocational college for engineering, arts and crafts (eight semesters) leads to the same qualification as the regular course at that college. Also leading to that qualification is a six-semester course which builds on a pre-existing qualification from a specialised vocational school. This course can also be attended by skilled workers whose apprenticeship has been supplemented by a two-semester bridging course. Persons with no previous knowledge of the subject can attend a special bridging course which prepares them for accessing the long cycle technical college programme.

A large section of the opportunities for adults are offered by private institutions run by the social partners. Examples here include the — open-access — foremanship programmes run by the *WIFI*s and *bfi*s. Many courses in the social sciences field are run by charitable organisations.

Figure 16: **Continuing vocational training at public and private adult education institutions, 1995/96**



(*) Intermediate vocational education programmes open to holders of an initial vocational training qualification

SOURCE ***AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT) 1996, IBE SPECIAL ANALYSIS.***

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3.3.2.3. Specialised academies *(Fachakademien)*

Since 1991 the chamber-run *WIFIs* have been running specialised academies offering education programmes which build up to a completed apprenticeship and are intended mainly to upgrade pre-existing occupational competence. The programmes operate with a part-time, evening class format (three evenings per week for three years). Eleven disciplines are currently on offer at Austria's 30 *WIFI* specialised academies.

In view of the permeability sought within the education and training system it is interesting to note that the specialised academy qualification counts as a credit for four of the five subjects normally examined in connection with the alternative entitlement to access higher education (1991 amendment to the Access to Higher Education Act). Students holding the academy qualification are only required to sit an examination in the subject 'German' at the university. The academy qualification is also recognised as a substitute for part of the regular requirements to demonstrate competence to pursue a craft. This credit effect was laid down in the 1994 implementation regulations attaching to paragraph 18 of the Crafts, Trade and Industry Act (*GewO*).

3.3.2.4. University-run adult education

The universities' significance for continuing training has increased steadily in recent years. Virtually all universities now engage in public relations activities and are reaching out to the outside world. The new philosophy is not only to offer opportunities for scholarship and research but also to play a more active role in the continuing education and training sector by offering higher education courses and programmes. Universities have, in the past few years, been running approximately 120 such programmes which in 1995 were taken up by approximately 4 700 learners (see also Section 3.2.2.3). Women account for approximately 50 % of all students in such programmes as opposed to only 46 % in full-time study courses. The course conditions (some have high tuition fees) restrict access where enrolment is not sponsored by an employer or another institution, as a company continuing training measure.

A university centre for continuing training has been set up at the Danube University (*Donau-Universität Krems*) to meet the growing demand for post-graduate continuing training. During its inaugural phase, it is offering employees mainly part-time courses for which tuition fees are payable.

3.3.2.5. Initial and continuing training programmes organised under the Public Employment Service Act *(Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz — AMSG)*

The 1994 Public Employment Service Act makes provision for organising labour-market-related initial training, continuing training and retraining programmes and for schemes to benefit specific target groups or crisis-hit regions.

In accordance with targets laid down by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the programmes give priority to:

- integration of the long-term unemployed and other persons who are difficult to place;

- promotion of female employment;
- promotion of employment for older persons;
- integration of disabled persons;
- prevention of youth unemployment;
- combating seasonal unemployment.

The training offered to achieve these targets encompasses the following:
- updating existing skills to keep pace with technological and economic change;
- development of additional specialised knowledge and skills in an existing occupation;
- retraining schemes;
- promotion of apprenticeship training.

The Act also envisages the organisation of continuing vocational training measures as a means of preventing unemployment. The thrust of most programmes here is to raise job placement rates and adapt skills to keep abreast of technological advances and structural changes in the economy. A total of 170 000 persons benefited from the *AMSG* provisions in 1995, of whom 79 % (135 000) underwent training for reintegration into the labour market.

As the public sector has a particular duty to promote continuing vocational training for all groups in the labour market, the occupational information centres (*Berufsinformationszentren*) set up by the Public Employment Service (*Arbeitsmarktservice — AMS*) are catering for ever more adults in their advice-seeking clientele. The number of such information centres was increased to 41 in 1995, signifying that approximately half of all Public Employment Service offices now have an affiliated occupational information centre.

In 1995 some 158 000 youngsters and *Matura*-holders and 88 650 adults sought help at an occupational information centre, an increase of almost one third over the previous year. Additionally, some 3 200 groups (almost 70 000 individuals) took advantage of the services of these information facilities.

3.3.2.6. Private-sector providers

A distinction is made here between education and training programmes run by special interest groups, e.g. the Education Foundation of Industry, the Austrian Productivity and Efficiency Centre (*ÖPWZ*), ARGE Management, Hernstein International Management Institute, Linz Academy of Management (*LIMAK*), and private adult education organizations such as *Matura* schools, commercial colleges and schools of music. Alongside these there are also a number of private-sector distance learning colleges.

Some of these institutions specialise exclusively in continuing training for managerial staff, e.g. Hernstein International Management Institute run by the Vienna Chamber of Industry and Commerce. The Austrian Productivity and Efficiency Centre (*Österreichische Produktivitäts- und Wirtschaftlichkeitszentrum — ÖPWZ*) is a non-profit organisation run by the social partners with a view to promoting productivity in industry and the administration, and raising the quality of life at the workplace. The programmes offered cater for managerial and professional staff, particularly in the personnel field. Linz Academy of Management *(Linzer Management-Akademie — LIMAK)* offers high-quality initial and continuing training for international management personnel.

3.3.2.7. Corporate continuing training

Austria has inadequate information on its corporate continuing training market. The only really comprehensive data available are several years old, though work is now under way to contribute to updating the existing material. Another shortcoming is that corporate training statistics seldom give information on which training providers were used. Some market data can be gleaned from the *KEBÖ* statistics, from the Public Employment Service statistics (for the training segment covered by employment promotion legislation), and from the 1989 microcensus findings. Pronounced differences exist, however, between the data supplied by the various continuing training providers and extrapolations based on the microcensus.

According to the data from the microcensus conducted by the Austrian Central Statistics Office, 362 000 persons underwent continuing training in 1989. Compared with the figures from 1973 (262 000) and 1982 (306 000), this represents a clear upward trend.

The microcensus shows the central role played by companies on both the supply and demand side of the market for continuing training in the vocational sector. From the quantitative viewpoint, the most important external, outsourced providers include the Economic Development Institute (*WIFI*) and the Occupational Development Institute (*bfi*).

Of the approximately 750 000 persons who attended at least one continuing training event between 1985 and 1989, some 20 % reported that the most important event for them had been one organised by their own employer. Over 18 % cited an event run by *WIFI* and more than one in ten an event run by a public authority, though overlaps did occur here in connection with the *bfi* courses because *bfi* institutions implement the majority of courses commissioned by the Public Employment Service.

Many continuing vocational training events are held during working hours. 41 % of the most important events attended between 1985 and 1989 took place exclusively, and 9% mainly, during working hours.

3.3.3. Provision of continuing vocational training for specific target groups

3.3.3.1. Continuing training for persons with a physical or mental disability

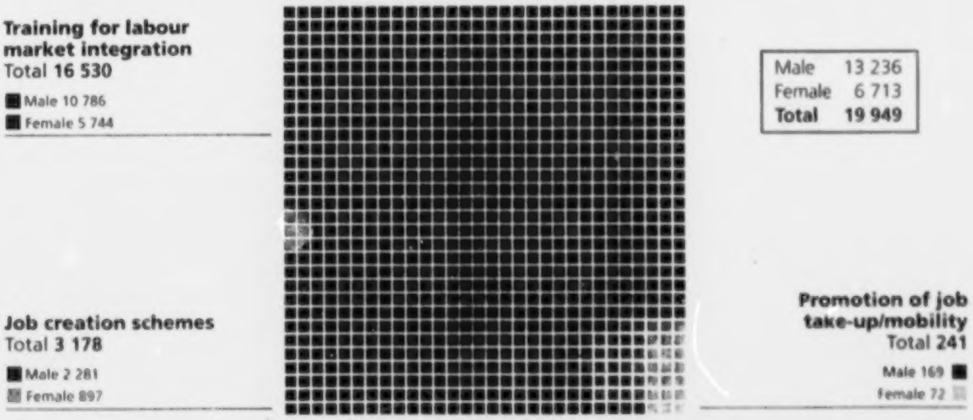
Particular importance is attached to the counselling and training of disabled persons as an instrument of labour market policy. The aim is integration into the regular labour market. As unemployment has been increasing among disabled persons over the past few years (1993: 26 800, 1994: 28 000, 1995: 30 000), the Public Employment

Service has been intensifying its efforts to

- promote training leading to vocational qualifications;
- create and safeguard jobs for disabled people;
- raise the number of temporary jobs set aside for the disabled; and
- expand the network of training centres to promote the integration of disabled people into working life.

In 1995 the Public Employment Service made special provision for approximately 20 000 persons whose placement potential was hindered — irrespective of extent — by a physical or mental disability or a sensory impairment. Over 80 % (16 530) of the beneficiaries underwent training aimed at integration into the labour market, and approximately 16 % (3 178) were placed in job creation schemes. Two thirds of the beneficiaries were males.

Figure 17: **Special measures for disabled persons, 1995**



SOURCE: *PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (ARBEITSMARKTSERVICE), 1996.*

3.3.3.2. Institutions and special programmes for disabled persons

In the wake of the Recruitment of Disabled Persons Act (*Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz*), special programmes have been in existence since 1989 to facilitate the integration of disabled persons into the labour market. The programmes provide for resources to be earmarked for creating additional jobs or training places for disabled persons in the private sector. Funds are made available to offset investment costs, sociopedagogic support measures and wage costs on the basis of agreements negotiated at regional level between the Public Employment Service and the State government concerned.

Increasing priority has been given in recent years to institutions engaged in preparing disabled people for entry into the labour market. Special training centres exist for persons whose disability currently prevents them from coping with employment

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even in a sheltered scheme. The provision here includes intensive support in the form of social help, learning therapy and psychological counselling aimed at preparing disabled persons for regular employment. A total of 48 such special projects have been implemented nationwide since 1989, backed up by funding to the tune of ATS 89 million. The result has been the creation of some 400 jobs and training places.

3.3.3.3. Continuing training for disadvantaged persons

In accordance with horizontal Objectives 3 and 4 of the European Social Fund and within the framework of an active labour market policy, special provision is made for groups of persons who encounter particular difficulty in finding employment.

Unemployment resulting from restructuring measures taken in connection with EU accession

Persons who become unemployed as a result of restructuring measures taken in connection with EU accession are assisted by means of redundancy foundations (*Arbeitsstiftungen*) and regional reintegration measures. The redundancy foundation packages include occupational guidance, initial and continuing training, active support in job-seeking, support for setting up in business and intensive promotion measures for older workers. The success rate of the redundancy foundation measures has traditionally been very high: for 1995 the re-employment rate was approximately 70 % of all participants in the scheme (see also Section 3.3.4 below).

Long-term unemployed

A further priority group are persons who are disadvantaged in terms of finding employment, including in particular the long-term unemployed, older persons and others in danger of becoming marginalised. It has to be assumed that unless these persons are given carefully targeted support, they will probably drift into permanent unemployment and thus to the margins of society. The aim here is to achieve permanent integration into the labour market using a step-by-step approach. A varied and coordinated range of guidance, training and employment measures are deployed in order to prepare these people for placement.

Promotion of female employment and equal opportunities

Special importance is attached to promoting female employment and equal opportunities between women and men within the framework of Austria's active labour market policy. The measures initiated here aim to counteract the existing tendency towards segmentation in the labour market and involve counselling and support for initial and continuing training with a view to widening occupational choice and thus improving earnings potential in the longer term. Also important for improving the employability of women returning to work are flanking measures such as child care provision.

Integration of young people

As young people could be integrated relatively smoothly into working life up to 1995, priority for intervention here has been given to aspects where well targeted measures can lead to better employment prospects in the longer term. Efforts to combat youth unemployment have therefore focused on guidance and help in choosing an occupation. The problem groups in the younger age range are mainly marginalised youngsters (prison record, substance abuse), school drop-outs, and youngsters who are non-nationals or members of ethnic minorities.

3.3.4. Legal and political regulations governing access to continuing vocational training

Alongside regulations for the general promotion of adult education institutions the Public Employment Service Act contains important provisions to promote access to continuing training, e.g. the 'training for the labour market' programme and promotion for initial and continuing training as an instrument of an active labour market policy. The Act lists a wide range of intended recipients of support:

- educational institutions,
- companies,
- specific courses and
- individuals.

The participants for a training scheme commissioned by the Public Employment Service are selected by the regional offices of that service. The associated promotion measures target the institution, company and person concerned. The Public Employment Service commissions continuing training institutions, companies, professional training providers and non-profit associations with implementing its training measures and is also itself engaged in intensive promotion activities.

A relatively new instrument of Austria's active labour market policy to alleviate the impact of the ongoing structural change is the 'redundancy foundation' (*Arbeitsstiftung*). The main aim in setting up redundancy foundations is to secure the prompt and permanent reintegration into the labour market of persons who have lost their job.

In 1995, 43 redundancy foundations were operating in connection with layoffs in a particular industry, company or region. Nationwide foundations were set up for the industries which were particularly hard hit by Austria's accession to the EU. These nationwide foundations include *AUSPED* for the haulage industry (approximately 1 000 participants up to June 1996) and *AUFLEB* for the foodstuffs industry (approximately 1 300 participants up to June 1996).

Depending on the type of foundation concerned (industry, company, region), the costs are borne by the Public Employment Service, the European Social Fund, regional and local authorities, employers and employees. Participants in the foundations receive unemployment/training benefit for a maximum of three years (in exceptional cases four) and a monthly allowance averaging ATS 1 000 to ATS 1 500. The success rates of the foundations have proved to be high: in 1995 the re-employment rate among all persons leaving the scheme was around 70 %.

The advantages of a redundancy foundation are:

- a package of tried-and-tested labour market policy measures to facilitate reintegration into employment;

- social security benefits for the unemployed person during the entire length of the retraining process based on a prolongation of the entitlement to unemployment benefit and the granting of a training allowance;
- training measures geared to the individual and the regional labour market;
- planned approach to plant closures, plant overhauls and operational restructuring measures.

To raise the efficiency of the training commissioned under the promotion of employment legislation, the programmes are regularly evaluated, improved and adapted to local labour market developments. As far as organisation and methodology are concerned, efforts are made to optimise waiting list time and training time by having recourse wherever possible to a modular format. The training programmes are constantly being revised to operate to higher skill standards — an upgrading process which entails longer courses, but which also results in higher average placement rates on completion.

3.3.4.1 Access to continuing training under the Employment Constitution Act

Labour law contains various regulations on in-company initial and continuing training, mainly setting out the attendant rights of the works council. The Employment Constitution Act (*Arbeitsverfassungsgesetz) — paragraph 94 ArbVG*), which regulates the legal relations between employer and company workforce and determines the nature and extent of workforce participation in corporate affairs, includes provisions on, *inter alia*, the rights of the works council (*Betriebsrat*) in relation to education and training:

- right to information on planned initial and continuing training programmes;
- participation in the planning and implementation of in-company initial vocational training and corporate continuing training and retraining measures;
- participation in negotiations on the above between the employer and the Public Employment Service;
- participation in the management of company-owned training facilities;
- right to submit proposals on training to the company management and possibilities of demanding a consultation thereon.

In principle, it is the employer who is the initiator of corporate training measures. Although the workforce representatives are entitled to be consulted on and make proposals concerning training measures, they have no power of decision-making or power to impose their will in this respect. Accordingly, the individual worker has no direct right to continuing vocational training. The works council's rights relating to consultation and proposition do, however, take continuing training into a realm which is not the exclusive domain of the employer, thus giving more weight to the interests of the workers directly concerned. As a matter of principle, participation in any continuing training measure offered is left to the discretion of the empioyee.

3.3.4.2. Continuing training as an issue in collective agreements

With only a few exceptions, the subject of continuing training and retraining has so far featured in collective agreements only in the form of a programmatic statement acknowledging continuing training as an element of workers' rights and duties. An example illustrating this point is the collective agreement pertaining to the terms of employment of employees of savings banks, which in paragraph 15 (continuing training) states:

> 'Employees are under an obligation to do all in their power to expand their occupational expertise and/or to make full use of all opportunities offered them in this respect by the employer. For this purpose the employer will make available to the employees appropriate opportunities in the form of specialist literature and other possibilities of further learning.'

Some collective agreements contain regulations on additional unpaid leave which is usually explicitly reserved for a specific purpose only. An example here is the framework collective agreement pertaining to industrial employees, which in paragraph 8(3) states:

> 'On request employees will be granted up to two weeks of unpaid leave per calendar year for the purpose of preparing for examinations in connection with relevant continuing training at a secondary technical and vocational school or college or a university. Agreement must be sought from the employer on the use to be made of the leave requested.'

Explicit agreements on continuing training are highly unusual in collective agreements pertaining to blue-collar workers. A special case is that for workers in the graphics industry, where provision is made in a collective agreement for time spent outside working hours on a successfully completed training measure to be remunerated at one half of standard rate (with a ceiling over five years of service set at the number of hours equal to one normal working week). The training provision is restricted to fully skilled manual workers and employees carrying out skilled manual duties.

3.3.4.3. Continuing training as an issue in in-company agreements

Although they are not systematically documented, the few company agreements which are accessible suggest that agreed regulations on training and retraining issues are unusual, and that where they do exist they seldom entail anything more than non-binding commitments. In some rare cases time spent on initial and continuing training is expressly recognised as working time and remunerated accordingly. One case (a large electronics company) makes provision for continuing vocational training at university level to be supported via a loan and additional leave in the run-up to examinations, though the loan has to be repaid in the event that the recipient leaves the company.

The works council's right to nominate individuals for participation in training events is usually explicitly documented. Some agreements also include provisions to the effect that participation in in-house continuing training events during working hours is a term and condition of employment and thus mandatory.

3.3.5. Participation in continuing vocational training

3.3.5.1. Participation in continuing training by age, gender and educational background

The Austrian Central Statistics Office (*ÖSTAT*) has compiled statistics on participation in continuing training within the framework of a microcensus. Extrapolations based on some three million respondents suggest that almost 745 000 people (24.2 %) underwent continuing vocational training during the period 1985–89. The data show a clear upward trend in participation (1985–87: 408 000 persons; 1988: 338 000; 1989: 362 000). The courses most frequently cited were data processing (13 %), personal development (10 %), commerce, business management and law (10 %), languages (7 %), organisation (6 %) and work safety, accident prevention and first aid (4 %). A similar picture emerges from surveys on corporate continuing training activities. The most common subjects here are commercial and technical computing, communication, foreign languages, new technologies, law/economics, environmental protection, standards and management.

Participation in continuing vocational training differs clearly as a function of gender, age, educational background and occupational status. The findings from the microcensus suggest the following basic structural features.

Gender

In the period 1985–89, of the total of 745 000 participants, 483 000 were men and 262 000 women. The participation rate was more than one quarter among men (26 %) and just over one fifth among women (21.4 %). Changes from year to year, however, suggest a trend towards equalisation in this respect.

Age

Continuing vocational training measures are attended mainly by persons in the 20 to 39 age range. In the period 1985–89, the participation rate in this age range was approximately 30 % (men 32 %, women 26 %). Participation rates decline considerably with advancing age.

Educational background

Participation in continuing vocational training rises continually with increasing levels of initial education and training. During the period 1985–89 the participation rate ranged from less than one fifth (18.1 %) among persons with no post-compulsory education or training to almost 50 % among university graduates.

Occupational status

According to the results of the microcensus, occupational status is one of the main determinants of participation. The highest rates of participation during the 1985–89 period were recorded by public servants and the self-employed (38 % each) and white-collar employees (33 %), though considerably higher participation rates within these groups were reported by senior public servants (50 %), senior employees (43 %), and self-employed persons with a university education (45 %). Entrepreneurs (24 %) and contract employees (32 %) were positioned, respectively, slightly below and slightly above the average figure. Blue-collar workers are relatively seldom present on continuing vocational training courses (15 %); only master craftsmen and foremen were found to have an above-average participation rate (36 %). The lowest participation rate was found among persons engaged in agriculture and forestry (10 %). Participation rates are generally very heavily influenced by company size.

More recent investigations on participation in continuing training among company employees show a similar picture in many respects. The average participation rate is around one third, the highest being reported by top and senior management (60 %), followed by white-collar commercial and technical employees (45 % and 37 % respectively). The rate among skilled workers is around 25 %.

3.3.5.2. Participation in continuing training by sector and company size

The larger a company is, the more able and likely it is to organise continuing training courses for its own staff or clients. Many large companies have their own human resource development departments which are responsible for initial and continuing training for the company workforce. Some such departments have developed into full-blown service centres, especially in companies relying heavily on export business, which not only sell their products but also provide training in using them.

In small and medium-sized companies continuing training mainly takes the form of self-managed skill acquisition at the workplace, visits to trade fairs and participation in courses organised for industry by various external training providers (*WIFI*, *bfi*).

Table 5: **Employers as course organisers**

Number of employees on site	**Number of companies**	**Percentage of companies organising courses**
4 or fewer	121 200	19.1
5 to 19	196 600	32.7
20 to 49	130 100	34.8
50 to 99	76 900	32.3
100 to 499	108 700	41.8
500 or more	82 700	50.4
Total	**744 400**	**33.6**

SOURCE: AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT) 1992.

The importance of externally sourced continuing training for small and medium-sized companies has been confirmed by the findings of company surveys: 84 % of small companies (with fewer than 50 employees) report that external training events are their main form of continuing training compared with only 34 % stating that their main training format is the in-house seminar. As expected, the inherent structural nature of small and medium-sized companies means that they are less heavily engaged than larger companies in organising formal in-house training.

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Table 6: **Form of continuing training by company size (in per cent)**

Form of training (1)	**Number of employees** **20 to 49**	 **50 to 499**	 **500 or more**
External events	84	96	99
Visits to trade fairs	73	87	85
In-house seminars	34	52	90
On-the-job training	37	52	72
Computer-aided instruction	7	10	23
Documents for independent learning, distance learning	12	14	31
Number of respondent companies	*433*	*493*	*151*

(1) Multiple checkings possible.

SOURCE: **IBW-BETRIEBSBEFRAGUNG 1988.**

Just how important cooperation with adult education institutions is for skill development within the economy can be seen from the fact that 52 % of the approximately two million persons employed in industry are employed in companies with fewer than 50 employees.

On-site continuing training plays only a marginal role in agriculture and forestry, a sector which is virtually exclusively based on family units. Here, continuing training is sourced from external providers, particularly the chambers of agriculture and specialised continuing training bodies (Institute for Adult Education in Rural Areas — *LFI*). The expected priority subjects for training in future are business economics and farm management.

Chapter 4
Organisation and funding

4.1. Administrative structures and regulations

4.1.1. Basic principles of administration

Austria's system of vocational training can look back on a long tradition, which makes for a high level of continuity and complexity in the institutions which administer it. The structure of the education and training system necessarily entails a complex mesh of policy-making competence in matters relating to school-based vocational education, pre-professional general education and initial and continuing vocational training. The description of the allocation of responsibilities here is confined to the three main fields of legislation:

- for the schools sector: various pieces of legislation, including the Organisation of Schooling Act and the School Instruction Act;
- for universities and other institutes of higher education: the Organisation of Universities Act, the University Education Act (*UniStG*, formerly the General Higher Education Act), and the Specialised Institute of Higher Education Act (*FHStG*);
- given the major importance of apprenticeship within the initial vocational training sector, the third main legal pillar of the Austrian education and training system is the Initial Vocational Training Act.

All these legal regimes have one thing in common: starting at the highest level of Austria's federal structure each of them defines areas of autonomy and devolved competences for each of the lower levels. Where competence is devolved, the subordinate level is accountable to the superior level. Where competence is autonomous, each level can act independently and on its own responsibility. Another typical feature of the education and training administration is the existence, at the various levels, of collegiate bodies which, wherever possible, bring together as full voting members representatives of all the social forces relevant to the field of policy-making concerned.

The two main policy-making institutions in the field of education and training, which together form the Federal Parliament, are the National Council (*Nationalrat*), which is the more important chamber in this bicameral system, and the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*), which is the chamber representing the Federal States with a composition reflecting the population and party-political strengths in those States. Draft legislation is usually submitted to the National Council by the Federal Government on the basis of a unanimous vote. A two-thirds majority is required for passing legislation on matters concerning the organisation of schooling.

Before submission to the Federal Parliament, draft legislation and draft regulations are dispatched for comment to the federal ministries concerned, the governments of the Federal States and, to the extent that they concern matters falling within their field of competence, to any relevant statutory special-interest bodies. Also consulted in this procedure are any relevant voluntary special-interest associations, in particular those representing the interests of management and labour. In the case of matters concerning education, the consultation procedure also involves teachers' associations and the umbrella organizations of parents' associations and youth welfare associations.

Generally speaking, the technicalities of the decision-making process on education and training matters (a two-thirds parliamentary majority, sharing of competence by various territorial bodies: Federation, Federal States, municipalities) call for a coordinated approach by all parties involved. The extremely high degree of consensus required by this system is the *leitmotif* of Austria's education and training policy.

In its narrowest sense, the initial vocational education and training system comprises school-based vocational education, in-company apprenticeship training and study at a university or specialised institute of higher education. As such, it holds a position which is distinct from the mainstream general education system and the continuing training system.

4.1.2. Role of the social partners

Administering the education and training system involves not only state institutions but also the social partners. The term 'social partnership' is understood to mean various forms of cooperation between employers and employees (see also Section 1.1.1). The main institution through which the social partnership is exercised is the Joint Commission for Prices and Wages, which was set up in 1957 and subsequently acquired authority extending over all matters of economic and social policy. All bodies of the Commission (Competition and Prices Sub-Committee, Wages Sub-Committee, Sub-Committee on International Issues, Advisory Council on Economic and Social Affairs), operate on the principle of unanimity. The Commission is composed of the political representatives of the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Standing Committee of Presidents of the Chambers of Agriculture, the Federal Chamber of Labour, the Austrian Trade Union Confederation, the Federal Minister of Finance, the Federal Minister of Economics and the Federal Chancellor, who serves as chairman. The Commission currently has no direct statutory powers of sanction. It merely expects that its members will sway their own constituents to conform with its agreed policy positions. The most significant feature of the Commission is probably that it continually brings together, around a single table, the top officials of the social partners and government.

4.1.2.1. Involvement of the social partners in the legislative process

In accordance with the principle of the rule of law laid down in Austria's constitution, all actions of the public administration must derive legitimacy from legislation. For the social partners, this primacy of the law signifies that, in order to be able to discharge their duty of representing their members, they must be able to exert influence on the legislative process through representatives mandated to be members of legislative bodies. In their capacity as deputies to the National Council they are also represented on the various committees and can thus influence regulations on initial vocational education and training.

The social partners exercise even more influence (than during the parliamentary procedure) at an earlier stage, when they are involved in the legislative process through their right to comment on draft legislation. The Chambers of Commerce Act and the Chambers of Labour Act stipulate that draft legislation must be submitted to the social partners for inspection and comment before it is dispatched to the legislative bodies. This right to comment has a particular significance in the vocational education and training field. As influence, expertise and representations are meaningful as inputs only if the invitation to contribute them is more than a mere formality, they must be brought into the process at a time when account can still be taken of their view. It is for this reason that the social partners are integrated into the process before a formal bill is drafted.

4.1.2.2. Role of the social partners in initial vocational training

Representation of the social partners on governing bodies, collegiate bodies and committees

As stated elsewhere, State education boards are the federal bodies responsible at regional level for vocational schools for apprentices and secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges. Each State education board is composed of a president, a collegiate body of ordinary members and the chief education officer. Under the Federal Schools Inspectorate Act, representatives of the social partners are required to be advisory members of the collegiate bodies.

Attention should also be drawn to the so-called expanded school partnerships which are required under the Organisation of Schooling Act to promote the close contact needed between schools in the vocational sector and the business community. This cooperation can be brought about by means of committees attached to schools which include representatives of the social partners among their membership.

The social partners' possibilities of influence also extend to the teacher training carried out at the federal academies preparing teachers for service in vocational education. The Organisation of Schooling Act stipulates that the chamber of commerce and industry and the chamber of labour of the federal state concerned are to be represented by one member each, in an advisory capacity, on the governing bodies of these teacher training institutions.

Role of the social partners: the example of apprenticeship training

Apprenticeship centres (Lehrlingsstellen) *as first-instance vocational training authorities*

The apprenticeship centres attached to the chambers of commerce and industry also serve as first-instance vocational training authorities. They are an example illustrating that statutory bodies representing social partner interests can act as decision-making administrative bodies. The activities of the social partners here are based on powers which are partly original and partly delegated. The establishment of the apprenticeship centres signified the delegation of certain State responsibilities to the chambers of commerce and industry; in discharging these delegated responsibilities, apprenticeship agencies are subject to State instruction and the line of institutional command. Apprenticeship centres are federal agencies and indirect elements of the federal administration, i.e. examples of State powers being exercised through the non-governmental institutions to which they are attached.

The apprenticeship centres are supported in their work by the apprenticeship and youth welfare units of the chambers of labour. Mandated to defend the interests of apprentices, the main tasks of these units are to monitor the training provided by employers and to appoint delegates to important bodies responsible for apprenticeship.

Advisory councils on vocational training as advisors to the administrative authorities

Counselling the administrative authorities in vocational training matters is a task incumbent on the Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training (*Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat*) and its regional counterparts at Federal State level. A characteristic feature of Austria's Initial Vocational Training Act is that the regulations governing the various apprenticeship occupations are not published by the Minister of Economics until after the views of the social partners have been sought and submitted in the form of an expert opinion drawn up by the Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training. The initiative to revise such training regulations normally comes from the social partners, and their content is usually drawn up by the Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training. The Advisory Council is also empowered to submit reports and proposals to the federal education authorities on all matters relating to vocational training provision regulated by the Initial Vocational Training Act. This means that in all such cases the Advisory Council can itself take the initiative or respond to requests from the Federal Minister of Economics or the federal education authorities.

The Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training is attached to the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Its twelve voting members are appointed by the Federal Minister of Economics on the basis of nominations sought — in equal numbers — from the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Federal Chamber of Labour. Two additional members participate in an advisory capacity: they are teachers in vocational education who are appointed by the Minister of Economics on the basis of nominations from the Ministry of Education.

The corresponding regional institutions at federal state level are the State advisory councils on vocational training (*Landesberufsausbildungsbeiräte*), which are attached to their respective apprenticeship centre and are composed of four voting members. The members are appointed by the chief executive officer of the Federal State concerned on the basis of nominations sought in equal numbers from the regional chamber of commerce and industry and the regional chamber of labour. State advisory councils on vocational training advise the apprenticeship centres on implementing delegated tasks and are also required to draw up reports and proposals on training measures within the framework of a training network at federal state level and on financial support schemes to accompany vocational training.

Organisation of examinations

The role of the social partners in apprenticeship extends finally to the organisation of examinations. Under the Initial Vocational Training Act, the social partners are alone entitled to draw up proposals for the composition of the examination boards for final apprenticeship examinations and training aptitude examinations. The chairman of an examination board is appointed for a five-year term of office by the chief executive officer of the Federal State (*Landeshauptmann*) concerned on the basis of a proposal from the State advisory council on vocational training. The other members are appointed by the apprenticeship centre on the basis of lists of nominations specific to each examination date. The lists of nominations to serve on the examination boards for the various apprenticeship occupations are drawn up jointly by the apprenticeship centre after consultation with the appropriate section of the chamber of commerce and industry on the one hand and by the chamber of labour on the other. The appointments are for a five-year term of office.

Training aptitude examinations are held before examination boards which are convened by the chief executive officer of the Federal State concerned. Each board of examiners is composed of a chairman and two ordinary members who are appointed in a manner similar to that applicable to examiners for the final apprenticeship examinations.

Further stipulations concerning cooperation between the social partners in vocational training matters at individual company level are laid down in the Employment Constitution Act.

Initial vocational training in agriculture and forestry

For initial vocational training in the agriculture and forestry sector, the employers' and workers' organisations have analogous social partner functions within the agriculture and forestry apprenticeship and training centres which serve as first-instance vocational training authorities in this sector.

Influence of the social partners in the tertiary education sector

As the organisers of study programmes at specialised institutes of higher education (*Fachhochschulen*) may be legal entities in either public or private law, the social partners are in a position to organise such programmes themselves. Additionally, the social partners can exert a direct influence on the council responsible for these specialised institutes insofar as four of its members are appointed subsequent to nomination by the Advisory Council on Economic and Social Affairs (see Section 4.1.2).

With the consultation process duly completed, the new University Education Act has been in force since summer 1997. To ensure that extra-university bodies, in particular the social partners, are involved in the decision-making process in the areas of study covered by universities, representatives of management and labour have been granted a right to be heard during that process.

4.1.2.3. Role of the social partners in continuing vocational training

Much of the continuing vocational training provision in Austria is organised by the social partners and their respective organisations. The Austrian Adult Education Conference (*KEBÖ*) brings together the traditional institutions of adult education: the Study Group of Residential Educational Establishments, the Occupational Development Institute (*bfi*), the Institute for Adult Education in Rural Areas (*LFI*), the Austrian Economics Society, the institutions of Catholic adult education, the Circle of Austrian Educational Foundations, the Austrian Association of Educational Establishments, the Austrian Association of Adult Education Centres, and the economic development institutes (*WIFIs*) of the chambers of commerce and industry (see Section 3.3.2.1).

KEBÖ is an independent cooperation forum for adult education institutions throughout Austria which, while respecting the independence of each of its individual members, organises joint projects and represents common interests. Because of the structural changes which have taken place since the early 1980s, the demand for adult education and continuing vocational training has increased unabated, a phenomenon which has led not only to an expanding market on the training supply side, but also to changes in the activities of *KEBÖ*'s member organisations (a more professional approach, development of programmes responding in a more focused manner to market needs).

Figure 18: **An overview of the level of responsibility in the VET system**

Area of vocational education and training → / Competence exercised at/by ↓	Apprenticeship (dual-system)							Vocational education in schools *(BMS, BHS)*							Continuing education and training							Training and retraining for the unemployed							Higher education and training						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Federal level	1 3	1 13						1	1	1					1 2	1	1					1 4 11	1						2			2			
Federal State level	5	6	5					5	5						5	5						5	5 11		11				5	5					
Chamber level	7 10	7 10	8	9				10	10		9				10	10	10	9				10	10	10	9				10	10					
Local level				11 12		13					12	14	18			15	15	11	15		16		11 15	15	11	15		16		17	17	17	17	18	

1. Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs
2. Federal Ministry of Science and Transport
3. Federal Ministry of Economics
4. Federal Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs
5. Chief executive officer at Federal State level *(Landeshauptmann)/* Federal State government
6. State education boards
7. Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training
8. Examination boards and associated bodies appointed after nomination by Federal State advisory councils on vocational training and apprenticeship centres
9. Vocational information centres or apprenticeship centres attached to commerce and industry, vocational counselling by labour organisations and trade unions
10. Employers and labour organisations (chambers of commerce and industry, labour organisations, trade unions, chambers of agriculture
11. Public Employment Service (federal headquarters, regional offices)
12. Compulsory education institutions, vocational foundation course, first cycle of upper secondary education
13. Vocational schools for apprentices and companies
14. Secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges
15. *WIFI, bfi, LFI,* schools and courses for adults
16. Companies/private providers
17. Universities, specialised institutes of higher education and other forms of tertiary education
18. Compulsory periods of external work experience

Function

A) Legislation and regulations

B) Definition of content

C) Evaluation and certification

D) Information and guidance

Delivery through

E) Education institutions only

F) Alternance training

G) In-company training only

1 2 3 4 5 6 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 - Implementing role

5 7 10 11 - Advisory role

NB:
Owing to the complexity of the vocational education and training system and the large number of players involved, each with their own specific competences, it is not possible to present the system fully in this diagram.
The diagram provides a general understanding of the way in which responsibilities are distributed.

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4.2. Funding

4.2.1. Public-sector funding

4.2.1.1. Public-sector spending on education

A very important political decision which each country has to make is how great a share of public resources should be allocated to funding the education system. Closely connected with that decision is the further distribution of the education budget across the various sectors of education and the size of the public subsidies payable to educational establishments.

Table 7: Education spending by the Federal Government, 1990 and 1995 (in 1 000 million ATS)

	1990	1995
Federal budget as per statement of national accounts	564.7	746.6
Nominal gross domestic product (GDP)	1 783.4	2 360.1
Spending on science and research,	20.1	29.8
of which higher education budget	19.2	19.4
Total spending on education excluding higher education	47.3	66.7
Spending on vocational education	10.0	13.3
including:		
compulsory vocational education	1.0	1.3
commerce — intermediate and upper secondary schools/colleges	2.5	3.4
service occupations — intermediate and upper secondary schools/colleges	2.4	3.3
technology — intermediate and upper secondary schools/colleges	4.1	5.3

Table 8: Spending on education, 1990 and 1995

	1990			1995		
	billion ATS	Percentage of federal budget	Percentage of GDP	billion ATS	Percentage of federal budget	Percentage of GDP
Spending on science and research,	20.1	3.6	1.1	29.8	4.0	1.3
of which higher education	19.2	3.4	1.0	29.4	3.9	1.3
Total spending on education	47.3	8.4	2.7	66.7	8.9	2.8
Spending on vocational education	10.0	1.8	0.6	13.3	1.8	0.6

SOURCE: *FEDERAL MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, TRANSPORT AND ARTS (BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT, VERKEHR UND KUNST): HOCHSCHULBERICHT 1996, VOLUMES 1 AND 2, VIENNA 1996; FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS (BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR UNTERRICHT UND KULTURELLE ANGELEGENHEITEN) KENNDATEN DES ÖSTERREICHISCHEN SCHULWESENS, VIENNA 1997; IBW.*

4.2.1.2. School and tuition fees

Leaving aside private schools, attendance at all public primary and secondary schools is free of charge. Tuition at universities is likewise free of charge and access is unrestricted, i.e. not only are no tuition fees payable (except for extraordinary courses) but there is no *numerus clausus* system (except in the specialised higher education sector). The admission requirement for higher education is a matriculation qualification obtained in Austria or abroad, though in the latter case proof must be furnished that the qualification concerned also entitles the holder to study the subject concerned in the country in which the qualification was issued. The question of introducing tuition fees for higher education has been raised repeatedly in recent years, though it is unlikely that such fees will be introduced during the term of the current legislature.

4.2.1.3. Social support for pupils and students

A large number of state support schemes exist to overcome social barriers to proceeding to post-compulsory and tertiary education.

Indirect State support for pupils and students

This support is an important factor in ensuring social security during schooling and higher education and can usually be claimed by the pupil's or student's parents. It is available in various forms:

- family grant

This is a cash benefit payable to families; the amount depends on the number and age of child dependents. The general principle is that a family grant is payable for each child in education up to 27 years of age. For students in the tertiary sector, continued entitlement to a family grant is conditional on academic progress.

- sickness and accident insurance

Under the terms of the General Social Insurance Act (*ASVG*), pupils and students in post-compulsory education are co-insured as family members in their parents' statutory accident insurance scheme. Their flat-rate contributions are paid on their behalf from the Family Equalisation of Burdens Fund (*Familienlastenausgleichsfonds*). Concerning sickness insurance, students who cannot be co-insured can take out a personal policy which is subsidised by the Federal Ministry of Science and Transport.

- support through the Family Taxation Act (tax relief)

- support for student housing and student canteens.

Direct State support for pupils and students

The award of direct State support to pupils and students is linked to social criteria and, in the case of students, is conditional on the student's academic progress. Additionally, some special schemes exist which are exclusively associated with outstanding performance and for which no social criteria obtain. The following are examples of forms of direct State support available to students:

- study grant

The purpose of the study grant is to counteract social hardship by covering the entire cost of subsistence incurred by a frugal lifestyle. The study grant normally supplements subsistence payments from parents or partner, a family grant and the student's own income. A further purpose is to alleviate the financial pressure on students so that they are not obliged to take on paid employment during their course of study.

- travel expense allowance
- special grant for study abroad
- outstanding achievement scholarship
- special support scholarship

Awarded to support students having to carry out very costly scientific or artistic work.

- study allowance

Awarded to alleviate social hardship or particularly difficult study conditions.

- orphan's pension for students.

4.2.2. Corporate spending on initial vocational training

Unlike initial vocational education at publicly subsidised schools and universities, apprenticeship training is largely funded by employers. Corporate financial commitments to initial vocational training (gross costs, returns, net costs) have been investigated in an empirical study commissioned by the Employers' Institute for Education Research (*ibw*). This study did not take account of public funding, in particular that for vocational schools.

Depending on the occupational group concerned, average gross annual costs range from ATS 100 000 (hairdressers) to ATS 200 000 (metalworking, construction). The average figure taking all apprenticeship occupations into account is ATS 174 000. A full apprenticeship can thus be costed at over half a million ATS per person. Generally speaking, the gross costs are largely determined by the size of the training allowance payable monthly to the apprentice. At the time of research for this report, the monthly training allowance in the first year of apprenticeship was about ATS 4 300 in the trades and craft sector, about ATS 5 500 in the industrial sector, and about ATS 4 000 in the services sector. The training allowance payable increases as the apprenticeship progresses, reaching in the final year approximately 180 to 190 % of the amount paid in the first year.

Differences also exist from one occupational group to another in the financial returns generated by apprentices during their training, varying from ATS 184 000 per apprentice per year in wood processing to ATS 78 000 per apprentice per year in office work. If the returns are compared with the costs, the costs are greater in virtually all occupational groups. The highest figure is for office work: ATS 80 000. Slight net surpluses are generated in wood processing and hairdressing: ATS 4 000 per apprentice per year in each case.

Table 9: **Gross costs and gross returns, per apprentice and year, 1991 (in ATS)**

Apprenticeship	Gross cost	Returns	Net cost
Metalworking	207 000	168 000	39 000
Construction	205 000	149 000	56 000
Technical services	187 000	139 000	48 000
Electrical engineering	180 000	118 000	62 000
Wood processing	180 000	184 000	-4 000
Commerce and transport	167 000	117 000	50 000
Office work	158 000	78 000	80 000
Hotels and catering	153 000	116 000	37 000
Tailoring	140 000	98 000	42 000
Hairdressing	122 000	126 000	-4 000

SOURCE **IBW 1994.**

According to the extrapolated findings of the study, training employers spent a total of ATS 24.5 billion on apprenticeship training in 1992. Approximately two thirds of that figure — ATS 16.5 billion — were accounted for by labour costs (mainly training allowances), and ATS 8 billion by organisational and investment costs (e.g. depreciation, interest on tied-up capital). Extrapolation of the financial return figures suggests that apprentices generated a total of ATS 18.5 billion (substitution yields). Net costs to training employers thus amount to approximately ATS 6 billion per year. Comparison of these figures with those of a similar study carried out in 1981 shows a trend to the effect that returns from apprenticeship training are rising faster than training costs.

The costs of apprenticeship training can also be analysed from a different perspective. A study conducted by the Institute for Vocational and Adult Education Research (*IBE*) calculated a 'net return equivalent' from the operational output generated by apprentices and demonstrates that, taking the average of all apprenticeship companies, an apprentice generates 39 % of the output typical of a fully skilled worker. Apprentices thus account for a significant element of corporate output. The study also draws attention to previously neglected problems in calculating the cost of apprenticeship training. For example, a cost comparison between an apprentice and a fully skilled worker is implicitly based on the assumption that these are operating in competition with each other. This situation of competition exists not only in analytical studies but also on shop floors. For example, skilled workers (alongside auxiliary workers) form one of the first manpower categories to function as a substitute for a reduced number of apprenticeship places. The study also criticises the fact that conventional internal cost calculations do not take account of future, long-term returns, namely the returns obtained after completion of the apprenticeship, i.e. the return on the investment in transforming the apprentice into a fully skilled worker.

4.2.3 Incentives for corporate investment in initial vocational training

One financial incentive for retaining apprentices after completion of their training can be seen in the fact that the employer is thereby spared the cost of the recruitment procedure and induction training which would otherwise be incurred by taking on a skilled worker trained elsewhere.

More direct financial incentives to provide apprenticeship training are to be found in subsidies such as those payable under the public employment promotion schemes. The subsidies are awarded as grants towards the cost of providing training (training allowance, staff and material costs).

Employers and training institutions qualify for flat-rate grants in a number of circumstances, including:

- training girls for typically male occupations;
- training persons who are at least 19 years of age when commencing apprenticeship;
- allowing apprentices to undergo additional training under a multi-company scheme;
- training apprentices for several occupations simultaneously;
- training apprentices for broad-based, generic occupations provided these have already been legally recognised.

Table 10: **Level of special incentive financial support, monthly (in ATS)**

Category	Company	Training institution
Girls	4 000	6 000
Over 19 years of age	10 000	10 000
Additional multi-company training scheme	50 % of costs, maximum 8 000	50 % of costs, maximum 8 000
Multiple apprenticeships	4 000	4 000
Recognised generic occupations	4 000	4 000

SOURCE: *PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (ARBEITSMARKTSERVICE) 1996.*

The grants for training girls for predominantly male occupations are payable throughout the entire duration of the apprenticeship. Financial support may also be granted for necessary additional facilities (WCs, changing rooms). The grants for supplementary multi-company training are payable for the duration of such training.

The level of the grants payable from the second year onwards for over 19 year-olds, multiple apprenticeships and recognised generic occupations is laid down at regional level by the head office of the Public Employment Service in the Federal State concerned.

4.2.4. Funding of continuing vocational training

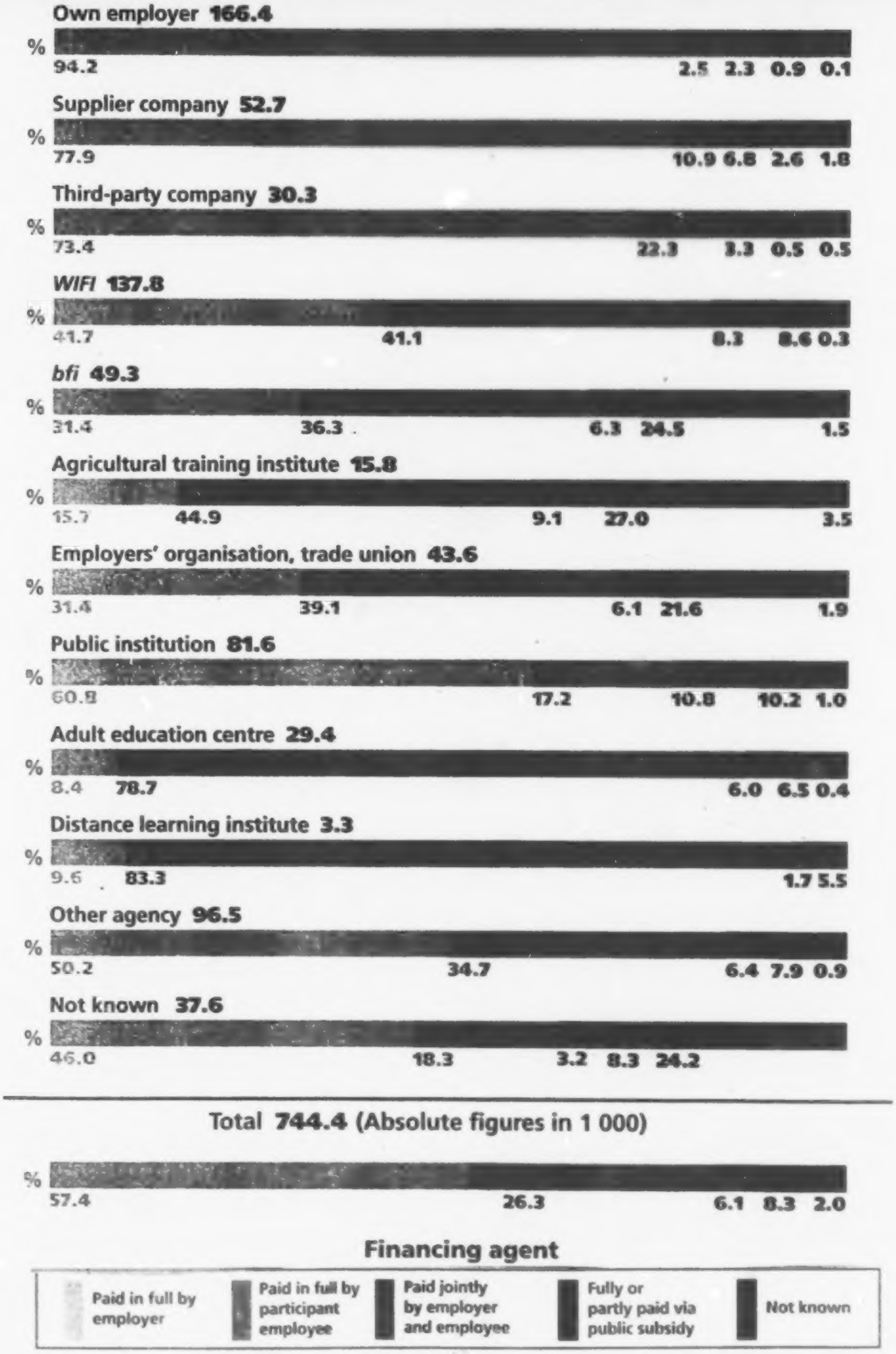
The cost of continuing vocational training is borne largely by private-sector employers, the public administration (at federal, State, and municipal level), the social partners and the participants themselves. Information on costs and funding, however, is incomplete, and the data from empirical research refer mainly to corporate continuing training. For the purposes of most analyses this is defined as covering continuing training measure, which are organised in-house by the employer and those which are financed by the employer but held elsewhere. Although the definition differs from one study to another in terms of breadth of coverage, the data collected on costs generally refer only to the sub-sector of organised continuing training events and ignore other forms of learning, e.g. on-the-job training and the various courses of personal development. Most of the surveys concern companies with more than 100 employees. The microcensus conducted by the Austrian Central Statistics Office also sought information on the investments made in continuing training by individual workers.

4.2.4.1 Corporate spending on continuing training

Corporate continuing training is financed almost exclusively by the employer concerned. Surveys have shown that employers bear the full cost in 80 % of cases and more than 90 % of the cost in a further 13 % of cases. Public subsidies were reported to have been received by 6 % of the respondent employers, the subsidy concerned amounting to between 1 % and 10 % of the total cost. The participant employees made a contribution to the costs in 14 % of the respondent companies, usually amounting to between 10 % and 20 %. Where such a contribution was made, the training event concerned was usually an external event which was attended on the employee's own initiative and paid for or subsidised by the employer.

According to the findings of the microcensus for the period 1985–89, 57 % of all continuing training courses were paid for by the employer and approximately 26 % were financed in full by the participants. Courses attended in-house were financed in full by the employer in 94 % of all cases, by the participants in full in some 3 % of cases, by the employer and the employee jointly in 2 % of cases and in full or in part by a public subsidising agency in 1 % of cases. Not included in this data were short seminars, information events and on-the-job training.

Figure 19: **Continuing training courses, by organiser and financing agent, 1985 – 89**



SOURCE: *AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT), 1992, BERUFLICHE FORTBILDUNG, ERGEBNISSE DES MIKROZENSUS 1989.*

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Several survey-based research projects have been carried out in recent years on the subject of corporate spending on workforce training. Many of these exclude spending on training for clients. The findings suggest that average spending per employee and year was ATS 2 600 in 1986 and ATS 4 200 in 1992. They also show that the larger the company workforce is, the lower the spending per employee tends to be (companies with fewer than 500 employees: ATS 4 600, companies with over 1 000 employees: ATS 4 000), a phenomenon which is largely attributable to the larger percentage of (more costly) external training purchased by smaller companies.

For companies with over 100 employees, this would suggest conservatively estimated total costs of at least ATS 5 billion in 1992. It should be borne in mind that this figure covers only seminar fees, fees for training personnel, travel and subsistence allowances for trainers and participants and material costs. Not included are the pro rata wage and salary costs of the participants, which amount to roughly the same figure, and, where appropriate, the costs of running a company training department.

One study based on the training cost figures published by medium-sized and large companies in Austria for the past few years arrives at an estimated figure for direct costs alone of at least ATS 10 billion per year.

4.2.4.2. Personal investment by participants in continuing training

No representative data is available on the personal investments made by participants in occupation-related continuing training. Rough estimates based on employee surveys conducted by the Austrian Central Statistics Office give a minimum figure of ATS 500 million, though the actual total is likely to be considerably higher. One factor to be recalled here is that under employment promotion legislation, subsidies are payable for course fees and travel and subsistence expenses for induction, skill upgrade and retraining courses, job try-out schemes, work preparation courses and occupational advancement courses commissioned by the Public Employment Service. It should also be noted that the consumer index for continuing vocational training has risen steeply over the past few years.

Vocational training courses attended on personal initiative (467 000 participants) are financed in full by the participant in 40 % of cases, jointly by the participant and the employer in 7 % of cases, and in part or in full by a public body in 11 % of cases. In the period 1985–89, 27 % of the total of 745 000 participants financed their training alone. A study conducted in Upper Austria concludes that 7 % of participants have the course fees for job-relevant courses reimbursed in full by their employer and 2.5 % in part.

4.2.4.3. Public-sector funding for continuing training

Direct public investment in institutions providing training for adults amounted to approximately ATS 3.35 billion in 1992 or 0.16 % of GDP. The institutions concerned include those running master craftsman, foremanship and construction trade courses, secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges, post-secondary courses and special, advanced courses for adults.

In future, an advisory body bringing together representatives of the largest adult education and continuing training institutions (and thus indirectly the social partners too), is to submit proposals to the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs on the allocation of financial resources in the adult education sector. This 12-member advisory body, set up in 1997, will table proposals on the distribution of a budget of currently ATS 130 million per year. Priority will be given on the one hand to specific projects, e.g. continuing training schemes for particular categories of person, and on the other to providing basic subsidies to individual institutions. In its deliberations the advisory body will pay particular attention to striking an appropriate balance in the support given to activities in the vocational and general education sectors respectively.

4.2.4.4. Funding for labour market policy measures

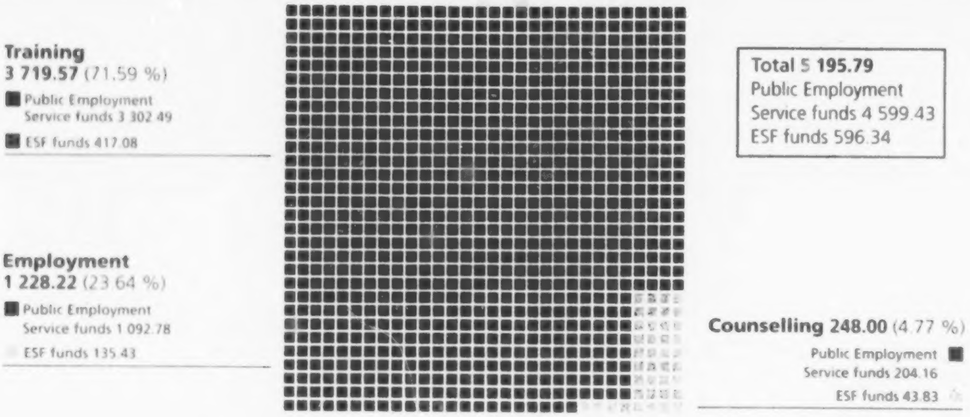
In implementing Austria's labour market policy, the Public Employment Service attaches fundamental importance to fighting unemployment. Its strategies involve both prevention, where activation has priority over maintenance and placement over support, and reintegration, where stimulation has priority over maintenance. Acknowledging that the supply of and demand for jobs can, to a certain extent, be tuned to match the gap between the skills required by the economy and those held by the labour force, the Public Employment Service organises initial and continuing training measures which are specifically geared to helping its target population adapt their skills as required. Its measures cover a broad range, including:

- updating of existing skills;
- development of specialised skills in the current occupation;
- retraining;
- support schemes for apprenticeship training.

The resources and activities of labour market policy contributed much in 1995 towards narrowing the structural gap between the supply of and demand for jobs, promoting employment and reducing unemployment.

Labour market policy resources amounting to ATS 5 196 million (4 600 million from the Public Employment Service and 596 million from the European Social Fund (ESF) plus a further ATS 196 million from special programmes were allocated in 1995 to a total of 169 971 qualifying cases. More than 70 % (ATS 3 720 million) of this promotion budget was used for training schemes to combat unemployment involving a total of approximately 135 000 persons (79 % of all qualifying cases).

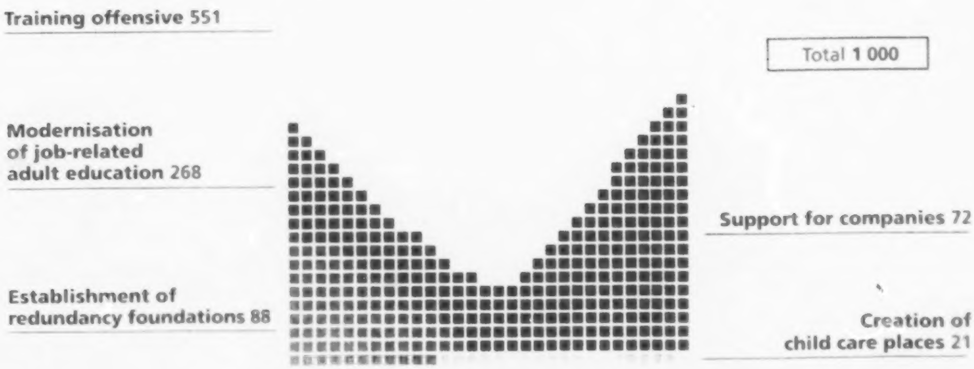
Figure 20: Investment in Public Employment Service training schemes to combat unemployment in 1995 (in million ATS)



SOURCE: **FEDERAL MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR ARBEIT UND SOZIALES) 1996.**

A further element to be considered in this respect is the Federal Government's 'Special programme to stabilise the economy and employment' which ran from 1993 to 1995 and was funded with ATS 1 000 million appropriated from the federal budget. ATS 153 million were disbursed in 1993, ATS 651 million in 1994, and when the operational accounts were settled in 1995 the remaining amount of ATS 196 million was spent on further labour market policy schemes and initiatives. A total of 38 344 persons benefited under the 'training offensive' and the 'redundancy foundations' initiatives (see Section 3.3.4). The so-called 'structural thousand million' was spread across different types of measure.

Figure 21: Special programme, 1993 to 1995, by type of measure (in million ATS)



SOURCE: **AUSTRIAN CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE (ÖSTERREICHISCHES STATISTISCHES ZENTRALAMT), GESCHÄFTSBERICHT 1996.**

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4.2.4.5. Funding from European Structural Funds: European Social Fund (ESF), European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF)

The labour market and structural policy of the EU is implemented mainly through three Structural Funds (social, regional and agricultural), which intervene on the basis of a framework of objectives and regions. The European Social Fund (ESF) intervenes alone in respect of the nationwide Objectives 3 (combating unemployment) and 4 (workforce training). It intervenes together with the Regional Fund and the Agricultural Fund in respect of regional Objectives 1 (regions lagging behind in development) and 5b (rural areas), and together with the Regional Fund in respect of regional Objective 2 (regions with declining industries). This three-pronged approach makes it more important than ever before for the Federal Government to embed its labour market policy within its regional and structural policy.

For structural Objective 1 areas (structural adjustment in regions lagging behind in development) and Objective 5b areas (structural adjustment in rural areas) and also for activities falling under the Community initiatives, Leader II and Interreg, the measures implemented (training in agriculture and forestry and training in rural areas respectively) are co-financed by the Guidance Section of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF). Measures of this type are envisaged in the state planning documents of Burgenland (Objective 1) and Carinthia, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol and Vorarlberg (Objective 5b). The guidelines relating to these measures provide for cash grants of up to 90 % of the personnel, material and investment costs required for project-related training measures. During the programme planning period 1995–99, the Guidance Section of the EAGGF will contribute some ATS 14 million to measures under Objective 1 and ATS 263 million to measures under Objective 5b. During the same period, Austria will receive approximately ATS 7 billion from the European Social Fund, i.e. an average of ATS 1.4 billion per year.

The ESF is scheduled to make the following contributions to regional labour market activities under its regional objectives programmes:

Objective 1	ATS 370 million
Objective 2	ATS 416 million
Objective 5b	ATS 990 million

The European Commission and Austria have agreed on the priorities for promotion and have laid these down in the programme planning documents. The following table shows a breakdown of the funding by target group under the main labour market Objective 3.

Table 11: **Funding by target group, under labour market Objective 3**

Target group	**Million ATS**
Support for workers adversely affected by structural change	337.5
Integration of the long-term unemployed, older workers and persons at risk of being excluded from the labour market	1 490
Disabled persons	1 246.5
Integration of young people into the labour market	300
Promotion of equal opportunities between men and women	800
Technical support for implementation	200
Total	**4 374**

The plans for Austria under Objective 4, which should amount to not more than 20 % of the budgets for Objectives 3 and 4, are set out below.

Table 12: **Planned spending under Objective 4**

Objective	**Million ATS**
Development of Objective 4 activities and needs analysis under priority area 'labour market trends'	58
Vocational training of the workforce	600
Further development of employment systems	110
Technical support	30
Total	**798**

Responsibility for overall coordination rests with the Federal Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs. The Public Employment Service is responsible for administering all labour market policy measures falling within the Public Employment Service Act and the Federal Social Offices for all measures for 'eligible disabled persons' under the Disabled Persons Recruitment Act.

In addition to its regional and horizontal development objectives, the European Commission is operating a total of 13 Community initiatives to tackle Europe-wide problems. Austria is involved in nine of these, which together attract EU co-funding amounting to some ATS 2 billion, i.e. approximately 9 % of the total structural fund allocation to Austria. The ESF is involved in all the Community Initiatives, though it is funding two, Employment and Adapt, as the sole financing agency. The Community initiative Employment has various sub-programmes: NOW (reintegration of women into working life), Horizon (integration of disabled and socially disadvantaged persons), Youthstart (integration of unemployed young people) and Integra (integration of the long-term unemployed). The Community initiative ADAPT is intended to cushion the impact of structural change by providing continuing training for persons who are currently still in employment. Some ATS 450 million of EU funding is available for the Employment and ADAPT programmes. Both are being implemented by the Public Employment Service.

4.2.5. Incentives for corporate investment in continuing vocational training

For corporate accounting purposes, spending on continuing training is charged to operating costs for the current fiscal year. Only major material investments (e.g. media equipment for training purposes) can be written off like other capital investments over a period of several years. A discussion is currently under way on introducing a tax-free allowance for training operations or a tax-free reserve (provision) for such activities.

During the collective negotiations for metalworkers and industrial employees conducted in autumn 1993, agreement was reached on an 'opt-out' clause which allowed real wage and salary increases to be replaced by company agreements on employment-promoting measures. The 76 companies which availed themselves of this opt-out clause mainly promoted employment by investing in machinery, research and development activities, and sales-promotion schemes. One half of the agreements also made provision for initial and continuing training measures.

For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), indirect incentives to invest in continuing training exist via the possibility of participating in the European Union's SME programmes to promote communication, cooperation and information. Notable examples here are the BC-NET (business cooperation network), Europartenariat and the possibility of obtaining information via Euro Info Centres.

Promoting employment by strengthening human resources as a major factor in corporate competitiveness qualifies for support from the European Social Fund under its Objective 4. Objective 4 interventions aim to prevent people becoming unemployed by facilitating the process of adapting skills to keep abreast of industrial change and new production processes. Particular emphasis is given in this connection to the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Research Promotion Fund for Industry (*Forschungsförderungsfonds für die gewerbliche Wirtschaft*) provides funding for R & D projects which are likely to lead to technological innovations and have a positive impact on the structure, growth rate and performance of small and medium-sized enterprises.

4.2.6. Incentives for individual investment in continuing vocational training

From the taxation viewpoint, the Income Tax Act states that employees can deduct expenditure on continuing training (courses, specialist literature) from their taxable income as income-related expenses. Continuing training, however, qualifies for this tax relief only if it serves to upgrade existing occupational knowledge and skills. In the event that the taxpayer has already exhausted the flat-rate allowance for income-related expenses, spending on such continuing training has a tax-reducing effect.

Over the past few years most Federal States have introduced a number of support schemes for persons undergoing continuing training, though there are considerable differences from State to State in the scale of the support, the targeted beneficiaries and the eligibility conditions. Examples instituted by employee promotion legislation include:

- the setting up of training accounts for employees meeting certain conditions;
- the issuing of training vouchers which can be redeemed against continuing training courses;
- subsidies towards certain training costs (e.g. travel costs);
- support for participation in specific courses (e.g. foremanship courses).

Some Federal States are planning to introduce loans for continuing training.

Under the terms of paragraph 19 of the Unemployment Insurance Act, 'redundancy foundations' (see Section 3.3.4) are set up for a fixed period of time to help persons, who have been laid off, to find jobs on the basis of initial and continuing training programmes and a counselling and placement service. In most cases the funding is provided by companies, employees, beneficiaries of the foundation, or the municipal, State or federal authorities. The Public Employment Service supports participants in redundancy foundation schemes by granting unemployment benefit for a maximum of three years — or in exceptional cases four years. Additionally, participants receive a grant generally amounting to between ATS 1 000 and ATS 15 000 per month. For similar training services delivered under employment promotion legislation the Public Employment Service bears 50 % of the costs.

Horizontal Objectives 3 and 4 of the European Social Fund are geared to supporting specific categories of persons, particularly those who find it unusually difficult to find a job. Objective 4 interventions support measures which help people at risk of losing their jobs to adapt to structural change and new production systems. Objective 3 interventions are focused on supporting workers adversely affected by structural change and helping the long-term unemployed, older people, people at risk of becoming marginalised and people with disabilities to find employment. Other promotional aims include the integration of young people into working life and equal opportunities for men and women.

Chapter 5
Qualitative aspects

5.1. Qualifications and certification

5.1.1. Public education system

Intermediate vocational schools (*BMS* — 3- or 4-year courses) and upper secondary vocational schools (*BHS* — 5-year courses) provide not only a thorough grounding in general subjects but also an initial vocational education. Their educational goals also include developing personal skills, occupational mobility and flexibility, creativity, a faculty for constructive criticism, a sense of civic responsibility, and teamwork and communication skills. The core curriculum in each case covers the occupational knowledge and skills defined in the Initial Vocational Training Act and the Crafts, Trade and Industry Act (*Gewerbeordnung*).

Because many fields of self-employment are associated, not least for reasons of longstanding economic policy tradition, with the necessary fulfilment of certain formal conditions laid down in trade law, Austria has a relatively large number of regulated occupations. A completed apprenticeship remains the classical preparation for taking over or setting up a craft business, though the competences acquired through this type of training also have an important impact on the professional conduct of employees. Moreover, the designation of an occupation signifies not only the nature of the occupational activity carried out but also the training path generally required to carry out that activity. The extent of occupational regulation in Austria may be confusing to outsiders, but such regulation does create a certain amount of transparency in terms of the nature of the skills acquired and the standard they meet.

For the vocational education sector in Austria this situation has a pervasive structuring effect insofar as vocational education courses are strongly geared to the access potentials they offer. Vocational education is therefore very highly differentiated. In addition to a general education, pupils not only undergo an occupation-related foundation course but also acquire the ability to carry out specific occupational activities, an ability which also gives them access to regulated occupations. Given this vocational education concept, a young person completing a secondary technical and vocational college for engineering, arts and crafts is equally entitled to proceed to university, seek employment or even set up a business in the occupation concerned.

Quality is assured by continuously updating the curricula, a process which — like that for drawing up new curriculum — entails close cooperation between experts from the education administration, the business community and the social partners.

Skeleton curricula which are applicable nationwide ensure that vocational education operates to the same standard throughout the country. Quality is assured in initial vocational training through a procedure whereby curricula are drawn up by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, but access to regulated, recognised occupations is determined by other ministries acting in consultation with the social partners.

Recognition of qualifications in the European Union

The second Recognition Directive (No 92/51/EEC) covers diplomas which are awarded on completion of a post-secondary course of at least one year's duration but which do not fall within the purview of the Directive on higher education qualifications (No 89/48/EEC). Annex D to the second Recognition Directive takes special account of the particular status of Austria's secondary technical and vocational colleges because these train to such a high standard that holders of the corresponding qualification are capable of entering occupations calling for a high degree of responsibility and self-reliance in carrying out complex occupational activities — activities for which training in most other EU Member States is provided at post-secondary level. Annex D makes inclusive provision for these courses by including in the list education and training courses in secondary technical and vocational colleges and upper secondary agricultural and forestry education (including special forms thereof), the structure and level of which is prescribed in legal and administrative provisions. The education and training courses concerned extend over a total period of at least 13 years and involve a 5-year initial vocational training leading to a matriculation qualification which includes a vocational qualification.

The Annex D list of special cases also includes the regulated master craftsman courses, the foremanship courses and the post-apprenticeship construction trade courses.

5.1.2. Apprenticeship — in-company and school-based vocational training

The knowledge and skills stipulated in the regulations governing training for recognised occupations are taken from real-life work contexts and compiled as constellations of competences known as occupational profiles. The knowledge and skills listed therein represent the minimum standard to which the training employer must train his apprentices. Occupational profiles thus ensure that the training standard for any given regulated occupation is uniform throughout Austria.

A uniform standard for the in-company component of an apprenticeship is, however, guaranteed not only by the nationally applicable training and examination regulations, but also by nationally applicable regulations on the training of trainers and the training aptitude examination.

Bilateral cooperation

In 1990 Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of vocational training and on the mutual recognition of vocational qualifications. Through this agreement 188 Austrian apprenticeship qualifications have been recognised as equivalent to 254 German apprenticeship qualifications. The work to establish equivalence between additional apprenticeship qualifications is continuing.

A comparable agreement was signed in 1994 with Hungary, a country which once had a highly developed apprenticeship system and is now working to reinstate it. Through this agreement 19 Austrian apprenticeship qualifications are already in the process of being recognised as equivalent to 19 Hungarian counterparts.

5.1.3. Continuing training

The continuing training sector in Austria is not regulated by legislation (the only federal law on adult education is the so-called 'Promotion Act' dating back to 1973).

Consequently, there is no formal provision for certification in the continuing training sector, though a type of certification has developed to some extent, mainly though the work of standards institutions (for welders, fork-lift truck drivers, etc.).

As a highly skilled workforce is becoming an increasingly important factor in corporate competitiveness, greater priority is being attached to developing high skill standards and competence in core skills. Here, the regulated segment of continuing training has a role to play, its explicit aim being to raise the skill standard of the workforce. The training offered in this segment includes master craftsman courses, foremanship courses, construction trade courses and other specialised courses for adults. The curricula and examination regulations applicable here are determined by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.

5.2. Training of teachers and trainers

5.2.1. Teaching personnel in the public education system

Initial training

Initial training for teachers in primary education, lower secondary education, special education and pre-vocational education is provided at academies of general education (*Pädagogischen Akademien*). Access to these academies is open to persons holding a matriculation qualification. The course lasts six semesters (three years) and ends with a formal teaching examination.

Initial training for teachers in general upper secondary education and teachers of general subjects in intermediate and upper secondary vocational education (*BMS* and *BHS*) is provided at universities and equivalent institutions in the arts field. The courses extend over at least nine semesters and entail two diploma examinations and the submission of an academic thesis. The final qualification is a teaching diploma (master's degree). Students study their chosen subjects (usually two) and education science, and are also required to complete two periods of training in a school, four weeks of teaching preparation and eight weeks of teaching practice. An additional one-year period of service as a junior teacher (flanked by attendance at seminars) is required before a graduate can be appointed to a tenured teaching post.

Teachers of commercial subjects in intermediate and upper secondary vocational education likewise undergo a nine-semester university course. The course involves a subject-specific component and an education science component during the last five semesters plus one semester of practical training in a school. It leads to the master's degree and a teaching qualification. A further two years of relevant professional experience is required before a graduate can be appointed to a tenured teaching post.

Teachers of engineering sciences and law must hold a higher education degree in their subject and have four years of professional experience. During their first two years of teaching they are required to attend a six-week course run by an in-service teacher training institute.

Teachers of practical skills in vocational subjects must have completed an apprenticeship, obtained the master craftsman qualification and have six years of occupational experience. Teachers of vocational theory in intermediate vocational education (*BMS*) must hold a technical matriculation qualification in a relevant subject and have worked for two years in a relevant occupation. The teacher training for both categories of personnel initially takes place at an in-service teacher training institute parallel to regular employment (four semesters) and subsequently entails a two-semester, full-time course at an academy of vocational education.

Teachers of the theory of food science and domestic science must hold a technical matriculation qualification and have completed a three-year training course at an academy of vocational education. One year of professional experience is additionally required before junior staff can be appointed to a tenured teaching post.

Teachers of general education subjects or vocational theory at vocational schools for apprentices require a technical matriculation qualification plus two years of relevant occupational experience. They are required to attend a six-week training course at an in-service teacher training institute during their first two years of teaching and subsequently a one-year, full-time course at an academy of vocational education. Practical instruction in vocational subjects is provided by qualified master craftsmen who have at least six years of relevant occupational experience and have undergone training at an in-service teacher training institute and an academy of vocational education.

In-service and continuing training

Under the terms of the Organisation of Schooling Act, in-service and continuing training is provided for teaching personnel by specialised in-service teacher training institutes (*Pädagogische Institute*). In-service teacher training institutes also conduct scientific research on problems encountered in day-to-day classroom work and in teacher training, and process the research findings to devise counteracting methodologies which are then propagated in their training provision.

Each federal state has at least one in-service teacher training institute run by either the federal or the state authorities. In budgetary and substantive operational matters, all such institutes are required to follow guidelines issued by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. The services offered by in-service teacher training institutes cover:

- skill update training;
- seminars, and sometimes series of seminars, on issues of current interest, education and curriculum reform, school development, school administration and personal development;
- continuing training to develop additional skills and raise standards of professionalism;
- courses for 'new' teachers (newly qualified teachers and persons entering teaching from the business world);
- events on individual subjects of instruction, pedagogy and education law to flank the practical initiation into classroom teaching.

5.2.2. Training personnel in apprenticeship training

Initial training

Companies which provide apprenticeship training must have at least one 'responsible' trainer on their staff, though that person may equally be the proprietor of the company. Most trainers spend only part of their worktime on training duties, the remainder being spent on their regular jobs. A 'responsible' trainer may also delegate some training duties to other staff members.

Since 1979 trainers have been required to pass a mandatory training aptitude examination. The examination is taken either before an examination board appointed by the government of the federal state concerned or as part of the master craftsman examination which at the same time confers the right to establish a craft or trade enterprise. The examination covers the planning of training, the preparation, delivery and monitoring of training, the basic principles of psychology and the law relating to training. Courses to prepare aspiring trainers for the aptitude examination are organised by the continuing training institutions affiliated to the social partners.

Since autumn 1997, attendance at a recognised training of trainers course involving at least 40 hours of training and an end-of-course interview has been regarded as an equivalent alternative to the aptitude examination.

Continuing training

Continuing training for training personnel is subject to no statutory regulation and any such training is undergone on a voluntary basis. It is offered by the continuing training institutions run by the social partners. In-company trainers engaged in apprenticeship training also have the possibility of attending the courses run for vocational school teachers schools which are organised by the in-service teacher training institutes.

5.3. Educational and vocational counselling

Educational and vocational counselling in Austria reflects the complexity of the Austrian vocational training system, a complexity which often makes it extremely difficult for the individual to choose the 'right' course of training. In addition to parents and friends, there are a large number of public and private counselling organisations which help young people arrive at a decision, institutional overlap often leads to confusion as to which agency to contact. With the exception of the vocational counselling work carried out at schools, virtually all information and counselling services have to be approached by the individual on his or her own initiative, and the system therefore often provides inadequate coverage for those segments of the clientele whose counselling needs may well be the greatest.

In recent years various successful information fairs and information weeks on career options with 'live' workshop facilities have been staged jointly by the Federal Ministry of Economics, the Federal Ministry of Science and Transport and the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs or by the chambers of commerce and industry, sometimes in cooperation with labour organisations and the Public

Employment Service. The aim of these events is to inform the interested public about the educational and vocational opportunities which can be taken up after compulsory or upper secondary education and also on the continuing training opportunities available in the various sectors.

5.3.1. Important institutions engaged in educational and vocational counselling

Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs (for the schools sector)

The counselling on educational opportunities at school provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs is intended as basic orientation and guidance for pupils and their parents. Under the terms of paragraph 3, Section 1, of the Organisation of Schooling Act, educational counselling should help people understand the complex educational system and provide information on the nature of the different types of school and the admission requirements applicable. School psychologists and educational counsellors work within schools to help pupils make their educational choices.

Information on working life is part of the curriculum in compulsory education, where it appears as a cross-subject topic known as 'Preparation for working life' to be addressed mainly during the seventh and eighth grades.

Since the 1989/90 school year, eighth-grade pupils in compulsory or general upper secondary education have been offered optional classes on career guidance and educational information (*Berufsorientierung und Bildungsinformation – BOBI*). There are plans to make these classes compulsory for sixth and eighth grade pupils in compulsory and general upper secondary education from school year 1998/99 on.

Other recent examples of the efforts which schools are making to help with occupational choice include the activity, reorganised in the 1990/91 school year, providing the possibility of gaining real-life experience of different occupations during special career try-out weeks or days and numerous school information projects specifically addressing the career and educational opportunities available.

In 1990 a post-qualification course on vocational guidance, educational information and preparing pupils for occupational choice and working life was established for teachers in lower secondary, general upper secondary and pre-vocational schools. The aim of the course is to raise the counselling and guidance competence of teachers who are responsible for the currently optional — but in future compulsory — educational and vocational information events in lower secondary education or for the compulsory instruction on practical work skills in pre-vocational courses.

National Guidance Resource Centre

Austria joined the European network of National Guidance Resource Centres (NGRC) in March 1997. Its national contact point for information on careers at the European level is based at the Leonardo da Vinci programme office in Vienna. The European network has been developing since 1992 and currently has over 40 centres in all Member States. The centres, which were taken over from the PETRA programme, are to serve in both the national and the European context as interfaces between education, training, the labour market and counselling and thus help promote occupational mobility in Europe. The national centres are responsible for collecting relevant information at national and transnational level and making such information available to relevant bodies. The National Guidance Resource Centre participates in projects initiated by the network on matters relating to career information and serves as the contact point and coordinating agency for relevant projects undertaken by Austrian institutions.

Public Employment Service

The Public Employment Service Act, in paragraph 32, lays down the responsibilities of the Public Employment Service (*Arbeitsmarktservice*) vis-à-vis job-seekers, namely to facilitate their placement, to secure their employment or self-employment and to provide information and counselling services. The Act also requires the Public Employment Service to supply information on the labour market and working life, to provide counselling on occupational choice, and to support workers and companies in creating and safeguarding jobs. This information, counselling and support work is carried out through booklets, reports in the media, special events and personal vocational counselling services provided in the regional offices and the career information centres (*Berufsinformationszentren*) of the Public Employment Service. The work of the latter differs from that of the information agencies run by the private business sector (see below) principally in the way it is carried out, with both institutions providing a comprehensive career information and counselling service but with different priorities.

Career information centres of the Public Employment Service

These career information centres operate on the basis of a uniform concept, and visitors find the same information media in each branch. The responsibility of the centres is to support young people and, where necessary, adults in choosing an occupation, coping with a change of occupation and planning their career by supplying appropriate information. Such information is supplied mainly on a self-service basis.

Each career information centre has five sections: information facilities, lecture room, exhibition area, test area and self-exploration area. Each centre is equipped with a 'Samsomat' system which provides information on occupations and current job and apprenticeship vacancies via a touch screen and which also distinguishes these career information centres from those of the business community (see below), as the latter have no direct access to job vacancy information. Once a visitor has studied the information and decided in favour of a particular occupation, he or she can consult the Samsomat to search through the labour office files for vacant apprenticeship places. The staff of the career information centres initially undergo an internal, on-the-job induction training course which is the same throughout the country, and subsequently they attend regular continuing training events.

EURES database

EURES, the European Employment Service database operated by the national labour offices, provides information mainly on job vacancies in other EU Member States but also on important labour law provisions and working conditions there (remuneration, leave, worker protection, working hours). EURES can be consulted in the local offices of the Public Employment Service.

Federal Ministry of Science and Transport (higher education sector)

The Federal Ministry of Science and Transport operates its own counselling service in six university cities to help students and intending students choose the most suitable course of study and provide support if problems arise.

The Ministry, sometimes in cooperation with other ministries, compiles and publishes numerous information booklets on the various courses available. It also commissions the production of information videos and is now developing its own computerised information software.

Chambers of labour and the Austrian Trade Union Confederation as bodies representing the interests of employees

The labour organisations (chambers of labour) and the trade unions offer educational and vocational counselling both directly and also indirectly via their jointly run occupational development institutes. Furthermore, the chambers of labour offer counselling in their capacity as the statutory bodies designated to represent the interests of young workers. Other important activities of the bodies representing the interests of employees include publishing information material and organising information events.

Chambers of commerce and industry and the Federation of Austrian Industry as bodies representing the interests of employers

Since the late 1980s employers' associations have set up a comprehensive educational and vocational information service operating throughout the country. The activities cover the production and dissemination of various information media, organising events for schools, arranging — through their members — possibilities for pupils and teachers to inspect company facilities and gain hands-on work experience, and providing customised information and counselling services for young people about to choose an occupation and adults seeking continuing training opportunities. The efforts of the various professional bodies ultimately caused them to join forces and set up their own career information centres, institutions which are now able to support and complement, in a professional and efficient manner, the schools and the Public Employment Service which are the institutions required by law to provide career information and counselling services.

Additionally, the apprenticeship centres affiliated to the chambers of commerce and industry in each Federal State carry out information and counselling work on apprenticeship matters and are responsible for attending to the training concerns of apprentices. Under paragraph 19 of the Initial Vocational Training Act, each State apprenticeship centre has a statutory duty to provide information and counselling on, *inter alia*, obtaining an apprenticeship, securing further training in the event of premature termination of an apprenticeship, switching from one apprenticeship occupation to another, and training within a multi-company training system.

Career information centres run by the chambers of commerce and industry and the educational counselling provided by the *WIFI*s

The explicit aim of the career information centres run by the chambers of commerce and industry and of the educational counselling provided by the economic development institutes (*WIFIs*) is to provide objective information on all education and training tracks of relevance to employers. This approach ensures that the services do not focus unduly on apprenticeship occupations.

The services cater generally for young people, adults, parents, teachers and employers and range from computer-aided, self-service information facilities to psychological testing, and from personal counselling to organising special events, e.g. events for schools, industry presentations, guidance on applying for jobs. The centres are run by vocational education staff, psychologists and practitioners from industry with experience of corporate training and personnel management. Initial and continuing training is provided internally on a modular basis, covering both the theory and the practice of dialogue-based counselling and meeting European training standards for vocational counsellors.

Adult education institutions (occupational development institutes, economic development institutes, community adult education centres, etc.)

The information and counselling activities of these institutions are focused on the various forms of continuing training and career advancement training.

Austrian Association of Higher Education Students, the statutory body representing the interests of students in higher education

The Austrian Association of Higher Education *Students (Österreichische Hochschülerschaft)* also provides counselling at the universities for students and intending students. Additionally it produces publications on courses and other guidance aids for students.

Associations promoting unconventional career choices by women and girls

The associations promoting unconventional career choices by women and girls, most of which receive financial support from the Public Employment Service, aim to counteract gender-specific discrimination against women and girls in matters of occupational choice.

Parents' associations, youth welfare centres

Finally, mention should be made of the numerous parents' associations, youth welfare centres, etc. which are continually endeavouring to shed light on the many problems associated with choosing an occupation.

Chapter 6
Trends and perspectives

A parliamentary two-thirds majority is needed for introducing reforms in many areas of education and training policy in Austria, a fact which perhaps explains why the social partners are so highly committed to cooperating in this field. A good example of such cooperative efforts, conflicting interests notwithstanding, is the report *'Qualifikation 2000'* (Education and Training 2000), which was drawn up by the Advisory Council on Economic and Social Affairs. This is a body, composed of experts appointed by the umbrella organisations of the two sides of industry, which convenes to cooperate in addressing various economic and social issues. The reforms proposed in *'Qualifikation 2000'* are aimed primarily at making the education and training system better able to respond to the challenges of economic and technological development with a view to meeting the skill requirements of the economy and society as a whole. The jointly drafted report was adopted unanimously by the social partners. Although it also envisages a large number of necessary minor reforms, the main concern reflected in the proposals is that of building on the strengths of the existing education and training system and adapting it to respond to changing economic, technological and social needs.

All the political lobbies take a critical view of the fact that education and career choices have to be made at a relatively early age in Austria. Children are required to choose, at ten years of age, between the first cycle of a general secondary education, which paves the way to the *Matura* qualification and higher education, and a lower secondary education, from which most pupils proceed to an apprenticeship. The final decision on which education track or which occupation is to be pursued is taken at the age of 14 or 15 years. Moreover, schools have only recently begun to attach real importance to the matter of educational and vocational guidance. Acknowledging these problems, the coalition parties currently in power and the umbrella organisations of the two sides of industry are in agreement that educational and vocational counselling must be improved and introduced on a much broader scale. The trade union federations and the Social Democratic Party have additionally been calling for many years for a uniform education for pupils aged between 10 and 14 (or 15) years. Such a uniform first cycle of secondary education is rejected, however, by the Austrian People's Party and the employers' associations on the grounds that a differentiated education system is better able to promote individual ability. The Social Democratic Party and the trade union federations also want to defer the point in time when occupational decisions have to be made and want schools to provide better counselling in this respect.

Because of the political and societal changes taking place in central and eastern Europe and the supra-regional migration flows moving northwards from the south, Austria's educational institutions will soon be confronted with the task of integrating into the system more and more pupils who are unfamiliar with the German language. Special programmes have already been introduced to address this problem (e.g. additional support teachers for classes with non-German-speaking pupils), but more still remains to be done in this respect.

6.1. Apprenticeship — the dual system

Given the decline, observed throughout the 1990s, in the number of companies providing apprenticeship training and the difficulties in placing would-be apprentices, various political initiatives have been launched since summer 1996 — after consultation with the social partners — to encourage employers to take on apprentices and to modernize apprenticeship training. Changing economic structures, particularly the expansion of the services sector (and within that the boom in services to business), plus the pronounced decline in goods manufacturing, have clearly focused the spotlight on the need to establish new apprenticeship occupations which take account of this new situation. At the same time efforts have been made to develop new incentives to encourage employers to provide an adequate number of apprenticeship places.

When asked to give reasons for the fall in apprenticeship places, employers are most likely to refer to the following:

- the tendency for more training time to be spent at school to the detriment of time spent within the company;
- the large amount of administrative red tape to be handled, which is particularly onerous for employers taking on apprentices for the first time;
- the high cost of providing apprenticeship training;
- too stringent and outdated regulations on what activities apprentices are not allowed to carry out during their training.

At an 'apprenticeship summit' held in February 1997, the responsible ministers and the social partners adopted a programme to promote apprenticeship training. Pursuant to that the following measures have since been introduced.

- Employers providing apprenticeships are no longer required to contribute to the statutory sickness insurance schemes on behalf of apprentices in the first to third years of training. The sickness insurance contributions for apprentices are now funded through a 0.1 percentage point increase in all employers' contributions to their employees' sickness funds.
- The list of activities which apprentices were previously not allowed to carry out has been modified to bring it into line with the generally valid provisions for the protection of young people in the workplace.
- The special break time regulations previously applicable to young workers have been amended to bring them into line with standard break time arrangements.
- Many previously intermittent periods of school attendance have been consolidated into training blocks.
- The procedures to verify the suitability of employers wanting to take on apprentices for the first time have been simplified.
- The arrangements for taking the trainer aptitude examination have been simplified.

In addition, various committees of experts have been convened to develop the training for new apprenticeship occupations.

6.2. Reforms in vocational education schools

6.2.1. Moves towards an 'internal school reform' in vocational education

A 1990 agreement between the ruling coalition parties contained a section on 'decentralisation, autonomy and co-determination at school' in which attention was drawn to the high degree of regulation associated with Austria's education administration. Referring to vocational education, comparisons were drawn with the modern organisation and management structures observed in successful companies which have flattened their hierarchies and devolved decision-making power to competent staff and have thus been able both to become more responsive to the market and to customers wishes and to raise the sense of motivation among their workforces.

The document goes on to point to the increasing complexity of decision-making and the trend towards individualisation and away from traditional patterns of social interaction, maintaining that these are creating a need for concrete experiences which can help develop dynamic skills and a sense of team responsibility — learning experiences which are best conveyed through project work. It concludes that such learning processes are far removed from those found in school, class or pupil group situations, where interactions are strongly governed by external forces and by an unduly rigid and legalistic interpretation of the learning process.

The recommendations of the Advisory Council on Economic and Social Affairs from the '*Qualifikation 2000*' (see above) and the '*Wirtschaftstandort Österreich*' (Austria as a Business Location) studies point in a similar direction. Referring to the content and form of learning in vocational education, the studies claim that an up-to-date approach to vocational training has to include, *inter alia*, the development of core skills.

By giving schools more autonomy, initial steps have been taken towards revising curricula to allow them to provide a thorough grounding in theory and practice followed by practice-geared specialisation. Such initiatives aim to ensure the immediate applicability of knowledge and skills acquired, a high standard of initial vocational training and a sound foundation for subsequent continuing training. One example of this approach is the 'Secondary Technical and Vocational College for Engineering, Arts and Crafts for Working Adults 1996' (*HTL für Berufstätige 1996*) project, which has been set the following goals:

- to simplify the organisational structure of vocational and technical education for adults by developing modular training opportunities;
- to promote lateral access to higher education by opening up new possibilities of proceeding to specialised institutes of higher education and of covering part of the programme by means of independent study;
- to re-profile the occupation-specific learning content of a technical college education for adults to make it a practice-geared alternative to study at a specialised institute of higher education;
- to provide for forms of teaching and learning which are appropriate for adults and, through the instrument of enhanced school autonomy, to undertake the curriculum modifications called for by the changes taking place in technology and the economy.

Most curricula now reflect the importance attached to strengthening personal development and social skills. In accordance with the tenor of the international debate on education and training, greater significance has thus been given to the quality of teaching and learning processes at school level and to issues of internal school reform. There is already some evidence of this policy being reflected in school development at local level.

Numerous innovations in vocational education are now helping to further raise the quality of vocational training and enable the youngsters proceeding from it to take on responsibilities in working life. Examples include the junior companies and the projects referred to elsewhere in this report, all of which aim for a tighter interlocking of theory and practice. Other innovations introduced in response to the trend towards greater internationalisation include participation in EU education and training programmes, special foreign language teaching initiatives and programmes to promote information technologies, networking and computer facilities in schools.

6.2.2. Introduction of a qualification giving lateral access to higher education

The qualification introduced by the 1997 Lateral Access to Higher Education (*Berufsreifeprüfung*) Act is a 'tailor-made *Matura*' giving access to a higher-level career or higher education. It is intended for persons who have successfully completed an apprenticeship or a vocational education course, including courses in nursing care and medical technology.

The corresponding matriculation examination draws and builds on the expertise gained during the apprenticeship or vocational education course, and the certificate awarded to successful candidates attests to a thorough vocational training plus a sound knowledge of German, mathematics and a modern foreign language. The additional knowledge required in the vocational and general subjects can be acquired from adult education courses, e.g. those run by the *WIFIs* or *bfi*, or, from 1998 on, from courses organised within mainstream vocational education. The various individual parts of the examination can be sat at any institution preparing students for the *Matura* qualification. Also admissible are independent study or direct registration for the examination.

This lateral access qualification is a logical step forward from the 15th amendment to the Organisation of Schooling Act which upgraded the status of vocational schools (i.e. compulsory vocational schools for apprentices), by designating them institutions of the second cycle of secondary education. The corresponding training track and qualification give all young people who, at the end of compulsory education, decided against heading for the *Matura* (i.e. in favour of intermediate vocational education or an apprenticeship) the possibility of access to a university education based on recognition of knowledge and skills acquired through alternative routes.

6.3. Reforms in higher education

6.3.1. Development of specialised institutes of higher education *(Fachhochschulen)*

In addition to the explicit aims referred to above concerning the recently established specialised higher education institutions, others relevant to that sector can be found in the more general education policy reforms envisaged in the policy programme set out by the government in 1990. Endowed with more independence and responsibility, individual educational institutions are to become more efficient and raise the quality of their product. This approach signified a departure from traditional education policy in Austria where institutions have conventionally been state-run and centrally regulated.

Building on this new approach, the Government's 1994 policy programme contained a commitment to expanding the specialised higher education sector. Particular importance was attached to two goals:

- providing programmes for adults in specialised higher education within the framework of a comprehensive continuing training system;
- giving apprentices access to this sector of higher education: the Specialised Higher Education Act (*FHStG*) lays down eligibility conditions which admit not only holders of the *Matura* or an alternative matriculation qualification but also persons with a relevant vocational qualification. The vocational qualification deemed as relevant and the additional examinations to be passed are determined individually for each course.

This admissions policy represents a departure from the conventional arrangement in Austria where generally it is the 'lower-order' institution which decides on admission to the 'higher-order' institution. As the impact of any departure from conventional procedure is not entirely predictable, the government programme calls for an evaluation of the merits or otherwise of this expansion of the powers of specialised institutes of higher education in matters of admissions policy.

Acting in consultation with the Federal Ministry of Science and Transport, the Advisory Board on Specialised Higher Education focused its work programme for the 1996/97 academic year on part-time courses scheduled to allow students to continue their regular employment (an expansion of specialised higher education courses for adults was also contained in the 1996 government programme) and on courses in the field of telecommunications and new electronic media.

6.3.2. Reforms in the university sector

Current reform efforts here are centred on implementing the 1993 Organisation of University Education Act, mainly on assigning each of the twelve universities a time slot within the statutory three-year period envisaged for implementing the provisions of the Act.

The main issue at the teaching level is the reform of legislation on university education. The new University Education Act (*UniStG*) has been in effect since summer 1997 and has introduced extensive deregulation and decentralisation within the sector. The key element of the reform is a uniform legal basis which prescribes only the number of semesters and total number of hours of study required for each course. While being required to act within this framework, universities and, in particular, the study commissions now have the possibility of carrying out much of the detailed planning of course curricula on their own responsibility.

In the distance study sector, activities are currently focused on improving the regional study centres in Bregenz, Linz and Vienna. International cooperation relations exist with the Open University Hagen (Germany) and, pursuant to agreements concluded in May 1996, the Open University in the United Kingdom. A 1995 amendment to the General University Education Act which has since been incorporated in the new University Education Act authorises Austrian universities to offer higher education courses or elements thereof in a distance study format.

6.4. The future of funding for vocational education and training

A characteristic feature of the education and training system in Austria — as in other EU Member States — is its wide range of different institutions each with different organizational structures, educational goals, target groups and funding mechanisms. Nevertheless there is clear evidence of a strong State presence in both secondary education and initial vocational training in terms of education and training content, and this presence also has repercussions from the funding viewpoint. By contrast, content and funding in the continuing training sector are increasingly being made the responsibility of private-sector institutions. One of the results of the latter shift is these institutions' stronger and more direct gearing of their activities towards their clients on the labour market, in particular employers and individual employees.

Changing skill requirements combined with the currently challenging labour market situation call for intensive efforts to ensure that young people find adequate employment and that adults already in employment continuously undergo training to develop new skills.

As these intensive efforts particularly affect the initial education and training system, it is only logical that the financial resources available to that system should be safeguarded and, wherever possible, augmented. Given the current constraints on public budgets, however, it does not seem very probable that the education and training system will secure larger budget appropriations within the near future.

Assessed from this perspective it must be assumed that education and training institutions which are totally or primarily dependent on public funding will have to be given possibilities of seeking alternative funding elsewhere. Looking to the medium term it is generally feared that the vocational education sector will not be able to count on receiving budget appropriations commensurate with its increasing importance for the labour market.

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Like other countries, Austria is already tending to grant greater autonomy to schools and other education and training institutions with a view to enabling these better to gear their product and its content to the preferences and requirements of their clienteles. This expansion of autonomy is a necessary prerequisite for improving cooperation between education and training providers and the players on the labour market.

Annexes

Annex 1

Acronyms and abbreviations

abf	*Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Bildungsforschung* Working group for training research
AHS	*Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule* General upper secondary school
AHS-O	*Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule-Oberstufe* General upper secondary school — second cycle
AHS-U	*Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule-Unterstufe* General upper secondary school — first cycle
AHStG	*Allgemeines Hochschulstudiengesetz* General Higher Education Act
AK	*Arbeiterkammer* Labour organisation, chamber of labour
AMFG	*Arbeitsmarktförderungsgesetz* Labour Market Promotion Act
AMS	*Arbeitsmarktservice* Public Employment Service
AMSG	*Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz* Public Employment Service Act
APA	*Austria Presse Agentur* Austrian Press Agency
APS	*Allgemeine Pflichtschulen* General compulsory education
ArbVG	*Arbeitsverfassungsgesetz* Employment Constitution Act
ASVG	*Allgemeines Sozialversicherungsgesetz* General Social Insurance Act
AUFLEB	*Ausbildungs- und Unterstützungsverein Lebensmittelbranche* Association for Training and Support in the Foodstuffs Industry
AUSPED	*Ausbildungs- und Unterstützungsverein Spedition* Association for Training and Support in the Haulage Industry
AWS	*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Wirtschaft und Schule* Study Group on Business and Schools
BAG	*Berufsausbildungsgesetz* Initial Vocational Training Act
BBAB	*Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat* Federal Advisory Council on Vocational Training
BEB	*Büro für Europäische Bildungskooperation* Office for European Educational Cooperation
bfi	*Berufsförderungsinstitut* Occupational Development Institute
BHS	*Berufsbildende höhere Schulen* Secondary technical and vocational college
BIT	*Büro für Internationale Technologiekooperation* Bureau for International Research and Technology Cooperation
BMAGS	*Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Gesundheit und Soziales* (formerly: *Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales*) Federal Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (formerly: Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)
BMHS	*Berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen* Secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges

BMLF	*Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft* Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
BMS	*Berufsbildende mittlere Schule* Secondary technical and vocational school
BMUJF	*Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Jugend und Familie* Federal Ministry of the Environment, Youth and Family Affairs
BMUK	*Bundesministerium für Unterricht und kulturelle Angelegenheiten* (formerly: *Bundesministerium für Unterricht und Kunst)* *Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Sport und Kunst*) Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs (formerly: Federal Ministry of Education and the Arts; Federal Ministry of Education, Sport and the Arts)
BMwA	*Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Angelegenheiten* Federal Ministry of Economics
BMWV	*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Verkehr* (formerly: *Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Tranport und Kunst,* *Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung*) Federal Ministry of Science and Transport (formerly: Federal Ministry of Science, Transport and the Arts; Federal Ministry of Science and Research)
BOKU	*Universität für Bodenkultur* University of soil science
BPS	*Berufsbildende Pflichtschulen* Compulsory vocational school (for apprentices)
BRG	*Bundesrealgymnasium* Federal secondary technical college
BWL	*Betriebswirtschaftslehre* Business management
CEBS	*Zentrum für berufsbezogene Sprachen* Centre for the development of occupation-related language learning
Dipl.Ing.	*Diplomingenieur* Title: diploma in technical education (tertiary level)
Dr	*Doktor* Title: Doctor
EAGFL (EAGGF)	*Europäischer Ausrichtungs- und Garantiefonds für die Landwirtschaft* European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund
EB	*Erwachsenenbildung* Adult education
ESF	*Europäischer Sozialfonds* European Social Fund
FH	*Fachhochschule* Specialised institute of higher education
FHS	*Fachhochschulstudiengang* Course at specialised institute of higher education
FHStG	*Fachhochschulstudiengesetz* Specialised Higher Education Act
FLAF	*Familienlastenausgleichsfonds* Equalisation of family burdens fund
FPÖ	*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* Austrian Liberal Party
GewO	*Gewerbeordnung* Crafts, Trade and Industry Act

HAK	*Handelsakademie* Academy of commerce
HLAWB	*Höhere Lehranstalt für wirtschaftliche Berufe* Upper secondary college for occupations in the services industry
HS	*Hauptschule* Lower secondary school
HTL	*Höhere technische Lehranstalt* Secondary technical and vocational college for engineering, arts and crafts
HTL-B	*Höhere technische Lehranstalt für Berufstätige* Secondary technical and vocational college for engineering, arts and crafts for adults
HW	*Handelswissenschaften* Commercial studies
IBE	*Institut für Berufs- und Erwachsenenbildungsforschung* Institute for Vocational and Adult Education Research
ibw	*Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft* Employers' Institute for Education and Training Research
IHS	*Institut für Höhere Studien* Institute of Advanced Studies
IKEB	*Institut Katholischer Erwachsenenbildung* Institutions of the Catholic adult education movement
Ing.	*Ingenieur* Title: engineer
IV	*Industriellenvereinigung (Vereinigung österreichischer Industrieller)* Federation of Austrian Industry
iwi	*Industriewissenschaftliches Institut* Institute of Industrial Research
KEBÖ	*Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs* Austrian Adult Education Conference
KJBG	*Kinder- und Jugendbeschäftigungsgesetz* Child and Juvenile Employment Act
KMHS	*Kaufmännische mittlere und höhere Schulen* Intermediate and upper secondary schools of commerce
KMU (SME)	*Kleine und mittlere Unternehmen* Small and medium-sized enterprises
LAFOS	*Land- und forstwirtschaftliche Schulen* Schools of agriculture and forestry
LAP	*Lehrabschlußprüfung* Final apprenticeship examination
LBAB	*Landesberufsausbildungsbeirat* State Advisory Council on Vocational Training
LFI	*Ländliches Fortbildungsinstitut* Institute for adult education in rural areas
LHS	*Lehrerbildende höhere Schulen* Higher teacher training institute
LIMAK	*Linzer Management-Akademie* Linz Academy of Management
LMHS	*Lehrerbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen* Intermediate and higher institutes of teacher training
LMS	*Lehrerbildende mittlere Schulen* Intermediate institute of teacher training
LWK	*Landwirtschaftskammer* Chamber of agriculture

Mag.	*Magister* Title: academic qualification
MAS	Master of Advanced Studies
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MHS	*Mittlere und höhere Schulen* Intermediate and upper secondary schools
ÖAAB	*Österreichischer Arbeiter- und Angestelltenbund* Austrian Labour Federation
OeNB	*Österreichische Nationalbank* Austrian National Bank
ÖGB	*Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund* Austrian Trade Union Confederation
ÖH	*Österreichische Hochschülerschaft* Austrian Association of Higher Education Students
ÖIBF	*Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung* Austrian Institute for Vocational Training Research
ON	*Österreichisches Normungsinstitut* Austrian Standards Institute
ÖPWZ	*Österreichisches Produktivitäts- und Wirtschaftlichkeitszentrum* Austrian Centre for Productivity and Efficiency
ORG	*Oberstufen-Realgymnasium* Technical upper secondary school — second cycle
ÖRK	*Österreichische Rektorenkonferenz* Austrian Conference of Rectors
ÖSTAT	*Österreichisches Statistisches Zentralamt* Austrian Central Statistics Office
ÖVP	*Österreichische Volkspartei* Austrian People's Party
PÄDAK	*Pädagogische Akademie* Teacher training academy
PI	*Pädagogische Institute* In-service teacher training institute
PräKo	*Präsidentenkonferenz der Landwirtschaftskammern* Standing Committee of Presidents of Chambers of Agriculture
PSCP(T)L)	*Polytechnische Schule* (formerly: *Polytechnischer Lehrgang*) Pre-vocational course
RG	*Realgymnasium* Technical upper secondary school
RÖBW	*Ring Österreichischer Bildungswerke* Circle of Austrian educational foundations
SchOG	*Schulorganisationsgesetz* Organisation of Schooling Act
SchUG	*Schulunterrichtsgesetz* School Instruction Act
SPÖ	*Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs* Social Democratic Party of Austria
SoS	*Sonderschule* Special needs school
TMHS	*Technische, gewerbliche, und kunstgewerbliche mittlere und höhere Schulen* Technical intermediate and upper secondary schools

TU	*Technische Universität* Technical university
UniStG	*Universitätsstudiengesetz* University Education Act
UOG	*Universitätsorganisationsgesetz* Organisation of University Education Act
VGÖ	*Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft Österreichs* Austrian Economics Society
VHS	*Volkshochschule* Adult education centre
VÖI	*Vereinigung Österreichischer Ingenieure* Austrian Association of Engineers
VÖSB	*Verband Österreichischer Schulungs- und Bildungshäuser* Austrian Association of Education and Training Establishments
VÖV	*Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen* Austrian Association of Adult Education Centres
VS	*Volksschule* Primary school
VWL	*Volkswirtschaftslehre* Economic studies
VZ	*Volkszählung* Population census
WIFI	*Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut* Institute for Economic Development
WIFO	*Wirtschaftsforschungsinstitut* Institute for Economic Research
WKÖ	*Wirtschaftskammer Österreich* Austrian Chamber of Industry and Commerce
WMHS	*Wirtschafts-, bekleidungs und fremdenverkehrsberufliche mittlere und höhere Schulen sowie sozialberufliche mittlere Schulen und Sozialakademien* Intermediate and upper secondary schools for occupations in the service industries and the social services sector
WU	*Wirtschaftsuniversität* University of economics

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Bundeskanzleramt
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internet: http://www.austria.gv.at

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(43-1) 713 79 95
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internet: http://gov.austria-info.at/Foreign/Affairs

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internet: http://www.bmuvie.gv.at

Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Angelegenheiten
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internet: http://www.wsr.ac.at.his-html

Annex 3

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Annex 4

Glossary

Arbeitsmarktservice **(Public Employment Service)**
Institution providing services for job-seekers: placement, referral to employment schemes, financial support, information and counselling. Its statutory mission under the Public Employment Service Act includes providing information on the labour market and working life, counselling in matters of occupational choice and supporting individuals and companies in creating and safeguarding jobs.

ArbVG **(Industrial Constitution Act)**
Legislation regulating collective agreements, company agreements, industrial constitution matters and the powers of the relevant public authorities.

Ausbilder **(Trainer)**
Persons who have passed the training aptitude examination and are authorised to train apprentices.

Berufsbildende höhere Schule **(Secondary technical and vocational college)**
Educational track aiming to provide pupils with an advanced general and technical education at upper secondary level enabling them to take up highly skilled employment and at the same time entitling them to proceed to higher education (dual qualification).

Berufsbildende mittlere Schule **(Secondary technical and vocational school)**
Education track at intermediate secondary level aiming to provide pupils with a basic understanding of a particular specialised field (to skilled worker level), and to consolidate and broaden their general education.

Berufsförderungsinstitut — bfi **(Occupational Development Institute)**
Continuing training institution run by the chamber of labour and the trade unions.

Berufsreifeprüfung **(Lateral access matriculation qualification)**
Qualification awarded to successful examination candidates from an apprenticeship or intermediate vocational education background which entitles these to enter higher education (universities, specialised institutes of higher education).

Berufsschule **(Vocational school for apprentices)**
Compulsory education establishment for apprentices which aims firstly to develop a basic understanding of occupation-related theory to support and complement in-company training and secondly to consolidate and broaden apprentices' general education. Attendance at vocational school is compulsory throughout the entire duration of an apprenticeship.

Bundeskammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte **(Federal chamber of labour)**
A statutory body representing the interests of all persons in employment in the private sector.

Diplom: Magisterium / Diplomingenieur **(First degree)**
Qualification attesting to an academic preparation for highly skilled professional employment.

Doktorat **(Doctorate degree)**
Qualification attesting to post-first-degree study and the ability to work with academic and scientific rigour.

Duales System **(Dual system)**
Apprenticeship based on two learning venues: in-company training backed up by instruction at vocational school.

Erstausbildung **(Initial vocational training)**
Vocational training undergone prior to entry into working life proper.

Fachhochschule/Fachhochschul-Studiengang **(Specialised institute of higher education)**
Institution in a new sector of higher education, established in 1993 with the possibility of private-sector providers — not a monopoly of the federal authorities. Courses aim to develop specific professional competence within an interdisciplinary knowledge framework, have a strong practical bearing and are designed to promote social skills. They culminate in a diploma examination composed of a written submission in thesis form and an examination before a board. The diploma (first degree) qualification entitles the holder to study for a doctorate at an Austrian university after completing a two-semester bridging programme.

Gewerbeordnung — GewO **(Crafts, Trade and Industry Act)**
Regulates access to and pursuit of occupations in most economic sectors, excluding those in agriculture and health care and the liberal professions.

Höhere technische Lehranstalt — HTL **(Technical and vocational college for engineering, arts and crafts)**
Technical and vocational colleges for engineering, arts and crafts offer general and vocational education at upper secondary level. Persons holding the corresponding leaving qualification who have additionally gained three years of relevant occupational experience are entitled to bear the professional title 'HTL-Ingenieur'.

Klein- und Mittelbetriebe **(Small and medium-sized enterprises)**
Enterprises employing fewer than 500 persons.

Ländliches Fortbildungsinstitut — LFI **(Institute of Adult Education in Rural Areas)**
Institute offering numerous continuing training opportunities, mainly with an agricultural focus.

Langzeitarbeitslose **(Long-term unemployed)**
Job-seeker who has been registered as unemployed for longer than six months.

Lehrabschlußprüfung **(Final apprenticeship examination)**
Examination taken by apprentices at the end of apprenticeship comprising a theory component and a practical component. The theory component is waived for apprentices who have successfully completed the final grade at vocational school. The subjects to be examined are laid down in the examination regulation pertaining to the occupation concerned.

Matura **(Matura)**
Final examination in academic upper secondary education and also part of the final examination in vocational upper secondary education. The *Matura* qualification entitles the holder to unrestricted access to all types of higher education.

Österreichisches Statistisches Zentralamt **(Austrian Central Statistics Office)**
State body for statistics and economic studies supplying most statistical data on population and economic activity in Austria.

Polytechnische Schule **(Pre-vocational course)**
Course which is compulsory for all youngsters who opt against spending their ninth year of compulsory education in intermediate education or upper secondary education and who have not already spent a ninth year at school through having to repeat a grade in primary, lower secondary or the first cycle of general upper secondary education. Pre-vocational courses aim to consolidate the pupils' basic general education with particular reference to the practical requirements of adult society and working life and also provide guidance on educational and occupational opportunities.

Reife- und Diplomprüfung **(Technical matriculation qualification)**
Unlike the *Matura* qualification obtained in general upper secondary education, the technical matriculation qualification attests not only to readiness to proceed to higher education but also to vocational competence extending beyond that required in secondary education within the meaning of the second EU directive on recognition of qualifications.

Sozialpartnerschaft **(Social partnership)**
A multipartite system for cooperation and conflict resolution in economic and social policy matters involving the bodies representing the two sides of industry and the government.

Volkshochschule — VHS **(Adult education centre)**
Adult education centres exist throughout the country and offer a wide range of continuing training opportunities at community level.

Verein Österreichischer Volkshochschulen — VÖV **(Austrian Association of Adult Education Centres)**
Umbrella organisation of adult education centres.

Wirtschaftskammern, formerly *Kammern der gewerblichen Wirtschaft* **(Chambers of commerce and industry)**
Established by federal legislation as the statutory bodies representing the interests of all self-employed persons in industry, the craft trades, commerce and the financial, insurance, transport and tourism services sector. Federated in the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, formerly the Federal Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut — WIFI **(Institute for Economic Development)**
Continuing training institutions run by the chambers of industry and commerce.

CEDEFOP — European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Vocational education and training in Austria

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